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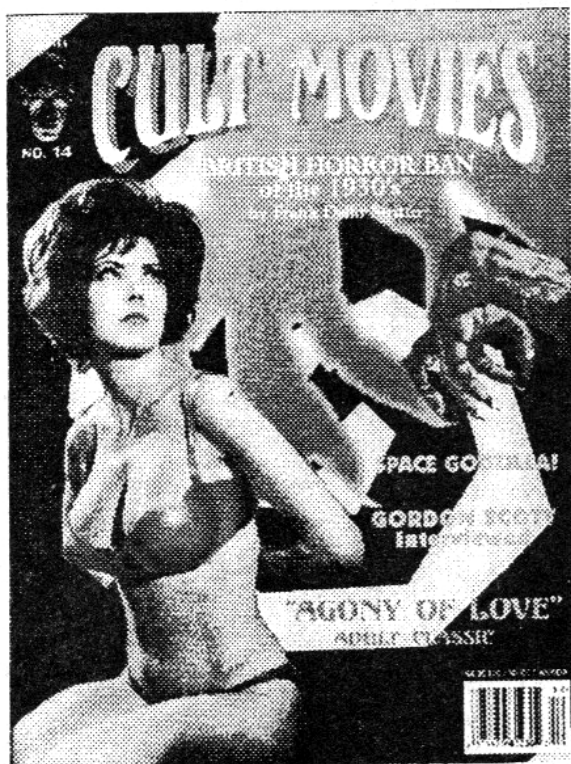


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This issue dedicated to the memory of
W. A. "Doodle" Barnett.

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Inside back cover: Bela Lugosi in *The Phantom Creeps* (Universal, 1939).

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Cult Movies

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Letters

Mantan Moreland and Shemp are two of my favorite character actors, so *The Strange Case of Dr. Rx* is worth seeing to me just for those two alone. As for Vampira, all her highfalutin' talk can't disguise the fact that she swiped "her" character from Charles Addams. At least Elvira gave the character a new twist when she stole it.

The best Dracula ever is neither Lugosi nor Lee. It was Ferdy Mayne, even if he was calling himself Count Krolock at the time.

Will Day
Eddington, ME

I am a really big Ed Wood fan and lately nothing in recent issues? ("The Ed Wood cult is beyond reason"!): Just a thought...how about an interview with Mrs. Ed Wood, Mrs. Tom Mason, Paul Marco? Steve Reeves and his thoughts about his role in *Jail Bait*?

Frank Austan
Voorhees, NJ

Thanks for running your very complimentary review of my movie *Things 3: Old Things* in issue number 27. I would like to inform any interested readers that the movie will be coming out early this year from Dead-Alive Video under the new title of *Dead Time Tales*.

As for issue 27 itself, it was more than usually brilliant this month. Two long essays by Frank J. Dello Stritto on his favorite subject, Lugosi, was enough to make it a milestone issue. There is simply no other writer out there who delves as deeply and as provocatively into this material; and he does it without ever seeming pompous or false. The interview with Dello Stritto himself was an unexpected bonus. It really helped put his work into perspective, and made me appreciate the man as well as the work. And that makes reading his stuff all the more enjoyable.

Of the two Dello Stritto articles, "The Dracula That Never Dies" is the more ambitious, and it succeeds masterfully. I did have a few questions, however.

In the first part of the essay, Dello Stritto speculates on why Dracula leaves Transylvania in the first place. He then proceeds to list examples of movies with various explanations. Everything from *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein* to *A Vampire in Brooklyn*. One wonders why he neglects to mention *Blood For Dracula* (a.k.a. *Andy Warhol's Dracula*) in which Udo Keir leaves Transylvania in search of virgins, which

he can no longer find locally. Seems this Dracula can only drink the purest of vintages.

It has been fan-vogue for several years now to bad-mouth the 1931 Universal *Dracula* as poor film making, and especially to slam director Browning. Dello Stritto himself speaks of the movie's shoddiness several times. He says that, "Dracula reveals that a poorly made film can still be a great one." But then he spectacularly examines the rich, dark subtext which makes the film so resonant and which is the key to its unique power. Browning was never a great technician, nor a particularly poetic painter of images. He offered something below the superficial, which to me is much more interesting. He put a microscope on the darkest underbelly of any character he decides to examine, finding psycho-sexual motives and primal capabilities. Through the use of subtext—communication in the form of a million little details of word, gesture, dress, lighting, etc.—he created a subliminal effect, a mood that the audience can feel. Browning was great because he danced on the dark themes he could not examine openly; flashy technique would detract from that. Browning reveals, like Van Sloan says in the picture, "little known facts the world is perhaps better off not knowing." But he whispers them. By shouting these truths too loudly, you diffuse their power. The simple-seeming use of an immobile camera is part of the reason his films are so palpable. Dello Stritto makes such a passionate case for my thesis. It surprises me that he doesn't seem to share it.

I am always a little offended when critics tout the Spanish *Dracula* over its English language counterpart, as Dello Stritto likewise does in his piece. The technique is perhaps more polished and some of the imagery more dramatically staged in the Spanish version, but it contains nothing of the subtext which makes Browning's film so rich and memorable. The Spanish version is a fine piece of work in its own right, ahead of its time in many ways. But it is not the influential masterpiece that is its English language counterpart. And that is to say nothing of its performances, which offer nothing even approaching the mastery of the unholy trinity Lugosi, Frye and Van Sloan. The so-called advantages that the Spanish version has over the English version are examples of well-produced Hollywood slickness; admirable to be sure, but ultimately more superficial than Browning's rich mood-piece.

Dello Stritto also brings up the debate of whether Browning or Director of Photography Karl Freund really directed *Dracula*. I believe they worked in collaboration, like any great director and D.P. But Browning's influence always took precedent. As a director, Freund was another great one for subtext. But his films feel more studied and cold than Browning's. *Dracula* has the bland, almost haphazard, foregrounds and the rich, textural backgrounds evident in Browning's films from Lon Chaney to *Freaks*. Browning was clearly, at least to me, the man ultimately in charge.

I seem to stand alone in my feelings about this movie, which used to be considered one of the greatest of horror films. It seems odd to have to defend it so vigorously. Perhaps I'm getting old.

Ron Ford
Los Angeles, CA

Whilst paging through the latest *Cult Movies*, I was reminded of a few terror tid-bits to throw out for your consumption. Letters about Bela Lugosi's monster portrayal in *Frankenstein Meets The Wolfman* reminded me of a talk with Patric Knowles' wife Enid back in the 1980s. She said they'd watched the flick on television, calling it "good for it's day. Patric liked

working at Universal, didn't feel typecast. Now he's completely retired from the acting world. Does a lot of wood carvings." The actor who played mild-mannered Dr. Frank Mannerling passed away recently; I had received a form letter from his daughter shortly before saying he was unable to sign autographs but I eventually purchased one from a dealer. Knowles has sometimes been mis-identified in book photographs as Errol Flynn.

Bela, Jr. visited the set at age four but recalls nothing of the experience: "I was too young then." Asked if his dad disliked playing the monster he merely replied, "No...I don't know."

There is a still showing Lugosi, encased in ice next to Lon Chaney. According to historian Blackey Seymour the actor originally got into the ice and the scene had him spouting some dialogue, but when the studio called him back for re-takes he refused so Eddie Parker subbed. It's an imposing first-view close-up of the monster but very obviously not Lugosi. One of the world's most roasted performances, yes—but I find it individualistic and not without interest. A relatively small part in an atmospheric, fast-paced chiller from the 1940s fun factory that was Universal Pictures.

Keep up the excellent coverage on your number one cinema subject!

Jack Gourlay
Lincoln, NE

I read with interest your mini-review of the 1971 film *Silent Running* starring Bruce Dern (*Cult Movies* #27) and it brought back memories of a friend of mine, Larry Whisenhunt.

Larry was a co-star in the film as Drone #1, one of Dern's helper robots. Larry was a double amputee and confined to a wheelchair all of his life but he was also an athlete who participated in handicapped sports such as wheelchair basketball. His athletic prowess was why he was chosen to don the drone suit in the film.

He was 17-years-old at the time of the filming. Much of the filming of the interiors took place in an aircraft carrier in Long Beach, California. He later was profiled on the now-defunct show, *Real People* around 1981.

In September, 1989, another friend of Larry's, Paul Evans, had been trying to telephone him for several days at home but was unsuccessful. Larry was found dead in his apartment on September 25. He apparently died in his sleep of kidney cancer. He was last seen alive September 18, 1989. He would have been 45 this year. He is certainly missed by all of his friends who cherish memories of his sense of humor.

Armand Vaquer
Tarzana, CA

Your magazine is unparalleled in its variety and scholarship. And besides that, it's real fun. Keep up the good work!

Albert Tapia
North Highlands, CA

It was good to read Mr. Tucker's history of Toho's two *Frankenstein* films, both favorites of mine and both rarely mentioned anymore. Katherine Orrison-Labby did a fine job with her Frank Dello Stritto interview. And finally, the piece on Vampira was very welcome; I always knew there was more to this woman than just a pretty face and impossible figure. She's got some insight inside her, too!

As always, yours is the best film magazine on the newsstands; something for everyone.

Robert Hughes
New York, NY

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Virgin Apocalypse (98)
vicious villains lure sexy babes into a sex camp. Tortured into submission, they fight back. Cat III (18+) BA

Aatank incredibly wacky killer shark movie- F.L. no subs - from India - letterboxed - loads of laughs and cool shark fx BA

Doberman (97) Hyper ultra-violent speed freak version of "Heat" F.L.

Turist Omer Uzay - crazy Turkish version of "Star Trek" ! Copies the characters right down to the hairstyles. Incredible ! F.L.

Enter the Seven Virgins (75) "Virgin" on the ridiculous ! Ultra RARE Shaw Brothers kung fu sexploitation - UNCUT F.L. (18+)

Grimms Fairy Tales for Adults (70's) twisted erotic mixing bag spoof of Cinderella and Snow White among others - F.L. letterboxed (18+)

Last Hunter, The (76) UNCUT, letterboxed - David Warbeck stars in this Italian version of "Apocalypse Now" ! (18+) BA

Lovers in Blood (80's) Letterboxed - Hindu horror in English ! BA (18+)



Guest of Satan: The Genesis (96) horror from Africa ! In English ! BA (18+)

Mind Breakers (92) Adam Baldwin, Robert England star in this unreleased in the U.S. sci-fi F.L. (18+)

Open Season (74) Uncut, letterboxed, Three Vietnam Vets go on a sadistic killing spree - Peter Fonda - John Phillip Law (18+)



Red Nights of the Gestapo, The (70's) Nazi sleaze (18+) BA

Rockbitch: Bitchcraft (90's) You won't believe these sex-crazed lesbian rock bitches ! (21+)

Sexo Sangriento -Bloody Sex (81) 18+

State of Mind (96) Paul Naschy, Jill Schoelen, Letterboxed horror (18+)

They're Coming to Get You ! (77) UNCUT import version of "Day of the Maniac" (18+)

Warriors, The (79) Letterboxed, UNCUT, import version with extended prologue and extra footage ! (18+)

Wicked, Wicked (73) exploitation, split screen horror - filmed in "DuoVision" (18+)

Monster of the Opera (62) Polselli Italian language (18+)

Without Warning (80) BA

Devil 666: Satan Returns (96) subs BA

Satanis : The Devil's Mass (72) Anton Lavey (18+)

Revenge of Billy the Kid beware the goat monster !

Cruel Jaws (94) shark mayhem (German language)

Salon Kitty (75) Tinto Brass directs - in English ! BA

Maniac Killer (76) Chuck Connors Dir. Andrea Bianchi ! BA

Female Vampire aka: The Bare Breasted Countess (73) 21+ BA

Femmes Desade Uncut RARE XXX (21+)

Last House on Dead End Street (77)

Aftermath: Special Edition (94) BA (18+)



Joy of Torture, The (69) 18+

Joy of Torture 2, The : Oxen Split Torturing (70) 18+

StreetFight (75) suppressed Ralph Bakshi BA 18+

Night of the Sexual Demons (70's) RARE ! In Italian

Cannibal Holocaust (78) BA 18+

Dead Pit, The UNCUT with MORE GORE ! BA 18+

Barbed Wire Dolls (75) FRANCO ! BA

Corruption aka: LaserKiller (67) Peter Cushing UNCUT ! BA 18+

Eaten Alive aka: The Emerald Jungle (80) BA 18+

Hunchback of the Morgue, The (72) Naschy ! BA

Son of Dr. Jekyll (51) BA

Beast With a Million Eyes, The (58)

Turning, The naked Agent Scully (Gillian Anderson) !! 18+

Arcane Enchanter, The (96) Pupi Avati horror 18+

Emmanuelle in America (70's) UNCUT ! BA 21+

Empire of Madness : banned gore flick rivals "Faces of Death" 18+

Seven Footprints to Satan (29) Italian subs

Curse of BigFoot (72) Obscure horror

Until Death (94) Lamberto Bava - IN ENGLISH !! BA 18+

Great White (82) UNCUT "Jaws" clone ! BA 18+

Guts of a Virgin (86) 18+

Murder Clinic, The (66) BA

Tender Dracula (74) Peter Cushing !

NightFright (68) John Agar !



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deep inside cult movies

by Michael Copner, Publisher



Composer and conductor Gillian Anderson (left), who re-worked the musical score for the 1923 version of *The Ten Commandments* for the grand re-opening of the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood, and Cult Movies publisher Michael Copner.

The movies predicted everything. Decades before the promise of the Y2K disaster, films such as 2001: A Space Odyssey depicted a space-age computer going mad, malfunctioning, and killing its human. *Westworld* was the fantasy land of a technological perfection where nothing could go wrong...wrong...wrong... And in *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, American computers overstep their bounds, form a link with Soviet computers and calculate that humankind is an evil necessity which is no longer necessary. The filmmakers saw this coming. They foretold as plainly and directly as Nostradamus ever did, what the future would bring. And we called it science fiction.

A well oiled technology has so infiltrated our every moment, that our generation cannot imagine what life would be like if the computers went mad, or simply shut off completely, as is predicted for New Year's morning soon to come. On his late night radio program, commentator Art Bell suggests that you can get something of the feeling of the Year-2000 bug by shutting off the electricity at the breaker switches. That done, simply walk through your home, taking in the new stillness. Do it around dusk so you can get the full effect of your house with no lights, no heat or air-conditioner, no television, radio or videos, no hot water, refrigerator or cooking appliances or any other essential conveniences. How will it feel? For a little while we might enjoy the peace and quiet, and things would feel as they did in the "Time Enough At Last" episode of *The Twilight Zone*. It would be a beautiful change, at least until it became time to brew a pot of coffee.

As almost everyone has heard by now, the millennial moment may bring great changes indeed when time-dated & related computer pro-

grams view the rollover from 1999 NOT to the year 2000, but rather to 1900 - a time long before you and I were "in the system." It might not be a good time to be hospitalized and have a life-support system decide quite logically that, since you don't exist, there's nothing to support. Will YOUR bank accounts and social security records be lost, even if the computers allow you to go on living? Many doom-sayers and tire-kickers believe (with alarming gusto!) that this is exactly what we have to look forward to. Roughly half a year remains until we find out.

Although I've lived within big cities nearly all my life, and am dependent on all that a big city livelihood implies and provides, I've never wholeheartedly bought into the golden promise of modern civilization and technology. Every doctor in the movies, from *Frankenstein* to *Strangelove*, has kept me in a skeptical frame of mind about the benefits of progress. Change is not always progress. The schmiestists are as out of control as the politicians (Does anyone remember President Reagan telling America that air pollution was caused by too many trees? I presume he thought photosynthesis referred to having his 8x10 portraits retouched). The more the controllers insist there'll be a better, brighter future for our children, the greater the certainty that things are shaping up pretty badly in the here and now. Weather control, genetic cloning, UFOs, organ banks and brain transplants may move out of the realm of sci-fi and on into reality. Or it may simply be the economics of a New World Disorder. Any brain surgeon can tell you it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that some kind of change is in the wind.

Optimists feel Y2K will be a quiet blip that will come and go, leaving things pretty much as they

now are. While the nay-sayers and skeptics predict it will be the start of a global depression.

And that circuitous path brings me to the subject of Los Angeles, a city which has long endured a kind of depression even in the midst of relative nation-wide good times. In a way, we are living in a state of preparation for Y2K every day in this LaLa Land of Southern California. I caught hell from a few readers and local associates for my previous column about the yin and yang of Hollywood's glamour/decay syndrome. But I wrote of reality and therefore confess no guilt. A simple walk through town will reveal the garbage strewn streets and the hundreds of homeless people living under the freeway bridge. Beautiful old theaters do sit boarded up, some very soon to receive the full rage of the wrecking ball. Preservation of Hollywood landmarks has been as slack as silent film preservation after the innovation of sound.

But there are grounds for some optimism. If we survive the End of the World that is Y2K, there are indications that a positive turn-around will be our New Year's revolution. Of some interest is the building now under construction east of the Chinese Theater which will be home of the yearly Academy Award® Ceremony and other film colony events. Of even greater intrigue is the already completed restoration job on Grauman's Egyptian Theater which sat abandoned for years. The historic old theater has been renovated by the American Cinematheque who will use the Egyptian as their headquarters for classic film presentations as well as screenings of first run productions.

The re-opening was celebrated on December 4, 1998 by a 75th anniversary vintage premiere of Cecil B. DeMille's silent classic *The Ten Commandments* which had originally premiered at the Egyptian exactly 75 years before to the very day. This lavish presentation showed off the theater and the film to best possible effect, as a full symphony orchestra was on hand to perform the original musical score used for the film in 1923. The music was composed and compiled by Hugo Riesenfeld (1879-1939). Born in Vienna, he was perhaps the most prominent of the musicians who worked with silent films in the U.S. Before becoming the musical director of the Rialto, Rivoli, and Criterion Movie Theaters in New York, he had been a violinist in the Vienna Opera Orchestra and concertmaster for the Manhattan Opera House Orchestra. *The American Organist* (May, 1920 issue) labeled his movie music productions as "photoplays deluxe."

For this 75th anniversary presentation, the musical score had to be re-worked by composer and conductor Gillian Anderson, as very little remained of the original sheet music. Ms. Anderson stated, "All that remains of the original orchestral accompaniment for *The Ten Commandments* is a piano score; the other instrumental parts having disappeared. The score consists of music that Riesenfeld wrote and music that he compiled from preexisting sources to fit the film. To restore the score, it was necessary to identify preexisting compositions, locate and obtain copies of the orchestral parts for them, and then to write new

orchestral parts for the sections written by Riesenfeld." This re-orchestration was done by Ms. Anderson and Joseph Parente with the critique of Stephen Burton. On show night, Ms. Anderson conducted the orchestra and the results were astounding. A vibrant, soulful live musical score woven brilliantly throughout the presentation of beautifully restored film is an artistic luxury many film lovers have never experienced. Kudos to the Cinematheque!

Established in 1984, the American Cinematheque is a non-profit, viewer-supported film exhibition and cultural organization dedicated to the celebration of the Moving Picture in all its forms. The Cinematheque presents film and video programming which ranges from the classics and world cinemas to the outer frontiers of the art form. In addition to exhibition of rare works, the Cinematheque often treats their audiences with fascinating post-screening discussions with the filmmakers who created the work.

In 1922 moviegoing was such a different experience than it is in these new and improved 1990s! The Egyptian was home to the very first Hollywood Movie Premiere when the theater celebrated its Grand Opening on Wednesday, October 18 of that year with Robin Hood starring Douglas Fairbanks. Newspaper ads enticed with "every star and director in the motion picture industry will be there to see the premiere." The film was not shown in any other Los Angeles theater that year. In his 2,071-seat theater, Sid Grauman built a 30-by-73 foot stage to accommodate the elaborate prologues he staged prior to the film presentations. They often included over 100 costumed

performers including "players (from the film) seen in their identical roles in the flesh and blood." Ads touted each prologue as being more incredible and spectacular than the last and Grauman reportedly oversaw every detail himself. He often used the 150-foot long open-air courtyard to display enormous props and animals from the films he screened, including pirate ships, elephants and an entire zoo. The theater's advertising slogan was "Where the stars see the pictures." The American Cinematheque spent a reported \$13 million for the historic renovation of the Egyptian Theater to its former glamour, now their permanent headquarters. This stunning architectural landmark brings the legacy of grand movie palaces into the new millennium, by utilizing state-of-the-art technology at work within a historic shell. The Egyptian Theater is the first of many planned Hollywood revitalization projects to open its doors for business.

With projects such as these either in the planning stages or already in operation, I'm optimistic for positive changes in Hollywood. It's been a tourist trap ghetto for way too long. Of late we've been unable to assure the tourists they'll have a fun time in the movie capital of the world (and it's none too safe or fun for the locals, as well). Ravaged by earthquakes, as well as by the rioting & looting that followed the Rodney King beating, to say nothing of the years of digging on a subway that is still not completed, this little town cannot offer streets that are safe, let alone driveable! But film is the name of the game, the reason for Hollywood in the first place. And it seems like some of us are re-awakening to that fact, getting around to

doing something constructive about it. If we're expecting to entice the teeming multitudes to visit our cozy little burg, we'd better have something more exciting to show 'em than \$25 dollar Betty Boop T-shirts and the nastiest meter-maids in the universe. If we expect people to come halfway around the world to see this place, let's give them what they're expecting to see. A little showmanship, a little glamour, and while they're here let's show them a few films, too!

You can't have film presentation without film preservation. And why have the preservation if you're not going to follow through with presentation? With organizations such as American Cinematheque going full speed ahead, we may soon have continuous revivals of great Hollywood films right here on Hollywood Boulevard. If we make it into the next century alive, we'll have 100 years worth of film to take along with us - a treasure trove from the greatest art form of the 20th century. It's nice to believe that the most creative center of filmmaking in the world will also continue to be a grand showplace for those films.

I'm counting on it.

Meantime, here's to a new world of gods and monsters...and cowboys, supermen, comedians, sex symbols, mad doctors, lawbreakers and ghostbusters. They're all here in *Cult Movies*, the mag that remembers the films other zines try to forget.

On with the show!

Sincerely,
Michael Copner,
Publisher

BEWARE THE SINISTER AND MYSTERIOUS...

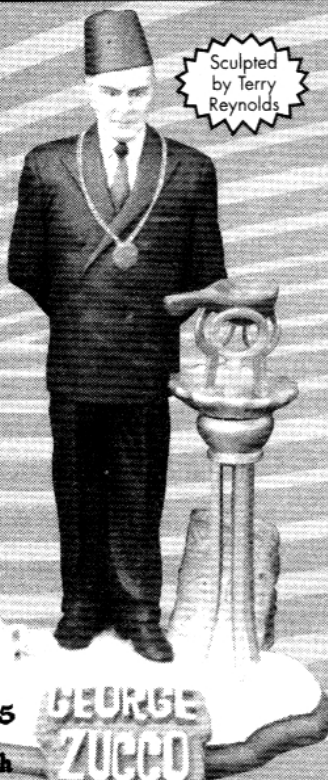
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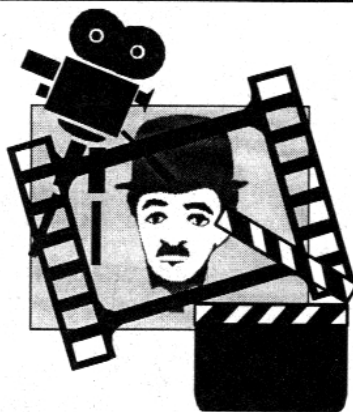
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SUPPORTING CASTINGS

Film & Video Reviews



Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike*.

Kino Presents Three Films From the Soviet Avant-Garde

In May, Kino on Video will be celebrating an era of revolution and experimentation in the cinema with the release of their second Soviet Avant-Garde series. Digitally remastered versions of Vertov's *Kino-Eye*, Alexander Dovzhenko's *Arsenal*, and Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* will be joining Kinos previously released Soviet classics, expanding a collection of formidable titles that helped place Soviet film in the forefront of international cinema during the final years of the silent era.

Creative versatility and adventurous exuberance characterized the Soviet cinema of the mid and late-1920s; avant-garde and traditional forms of filmmaking co-existed and flourished. The decade after 1917's October Revolution thrived on theoretical thinking and writing but, curiously, the spirit of wild experimentation that permeated Russian literature and drama in those days did not initially extend to Soviet cinema. Although many of the early Soviet films were fervent in their revolutionary content, few if any departed from the conventional norms in style. Within the State Department that regulated cinema, opinion was sharply divided on whether to permit and support avant-gardist expression in film. It wasn't until 1924 that the issue was settled—and formalized by a Politburo resolution in July 1925—in favor of nonintervention by

the state in matters of artistic style. This opened the doors for a burst of creative freedom which heralded the most exciting period in the history of Soviet cinema. Filmmakers like Eisenstein and Dovzhenko began a wave of output quite unlike anything that had been attempted before. Meanwhile, Dziga Vertov, whose experimentation had already been going strong with the unorthodox Kino-Pravda newsreels of 1922 and various workshop experiments in montage, suddenly found the freedom to turn his maverick ideas into remarkable new realizations.

Kino-Eye

(1924, Dir. by Dziga Vertov, B&W, 74 min.) A modernist of intellectual foresight and bold artistic vision, Dziga Vertov influenced in his ideas and films the works not only of his Soviet colleagues but also of many filmmakers on the international scene. New Wave auteurs and present-day practitioners of cinema verité—from Jean-Luc Godard to Mathieu Kassovitz—consider him the father of their movements. During his lifetime he was considered by many an eccentric, but his single-minded obsession with cinematic expression has had a lingering impact on the development of the art and science of film. In developing the theory of Kino-Pravda (cinema-truth), his goal was to capture the truth on film, excluding anything not emanating

from life itself though Vertov resorted to montage and other manipulative editing techniques in the belief that, by enhancing the emotional impact of film, he was reaching into "the purest possible essence of truth," providing a systematic "research into the chaos of visual phenomena filling the universe."

The ideas for the film *Kino-Eye* were first expressed in a 1922 magazine article, in which he spoke of the camera as an eye, more perfect than the human eye in its ability to move in time and space and perceive and record impressions. The feature length film (the first genuine Soviet documentary) of that title came in 1924, composed mainly of candid shots of people who were unaware they were being photographed. Vertov tried to show the birth of all that was new in the Soviet Union after the Revolution and its struggle with the old. In order to catch life unawares cameraman M. Kaufman went everywhere: market places, doss-houses, even a psychiatric hospital. For the most dynamic visual and thematic impact, Vertov manipulated the camera in every conceivable way, with optical tricks, downward and backward motion, speeded-up motion, double exposures, etc. *Kino-Eye*'s other notable impact was achieved in the cutting-room through effective structural symmetry.

A true masterpiece, *Kino-Eye* is being presented in a superior, digitally mastered version, and with a compelling musical score composed by Robert Israel.

Arsenal

(1929, Dir. by Alexander Dovzhenko, B&W 75 min.) In 1926, Ukrainian patriot/schoolteacher/cartoonist Alexander Dovzhenko was seized with a passion to make films and set out to Odessa, where the nearest film studios were located. According to his own memoirs, published in 1939, he had little or no idea of how films were made and had seen only a handful, but at 32 he became convinced that his future as an artist should be tied to this "entirely new and original" art for the masses. He wrote one script, which remained unproduced, then another, for the film *Vasya The Reformer*, which he also co-directed. In 1928 he made his first important film, *Zvenigora*, a lyrical epic of the Ukraine that marks the director's cinematic sensibility: a sensibility from which elements of history and folklore, stark realism and tender poetry, obvious propaganda and subtle satire blend into an exciting whole. Legend has it that after the premiere of *Zvenigora*, Eisenstein and Pudovkin displayed their recognition of Dovzhenko as their equal by joining him in an all-night drinking binge.

Dovzhenko's next film, *Arsenal*, is a classic of the silent Soviet cinema. The film is a dazzling display of visual virtuosity whose vivid images linger long in memory and is both a deeply committed political manifesto and a passionately lyrical film-poem. Based on an actual incident from 1918, the story concerns a group of Bolsheviks who battle against counter-revolutionary nationalist troops in Kiev. The group is finally and dramatically defeated, driven from their defense inside the city's "Arsenal" munitions plant. *Arsenal*, particularly the climactic battle scene, utilizes the most complex montage style of the period, and Dovzhenko's use of imagery from fantasy and folklore (horses replying to men, shots of a winter landscape suddenly intercut with summer, a mother waiting for her son at his already-dug grave) imbue the film with a symbolic and emotional intensity. Simultaneously, there is a hint of the influence of American comedies. The old comic trick of bringing a painted portrait to life (in this case the portrait of an old regime bureaucrat) is raised to the level of social commentary, with radical political significance.

This Kino On Video release is the definitive version of the legendary film. *Arsenal* features a powerful orchestral score and has been digitally mastered from 35mm archive materials, making it longer than any version previously available in the U.S.

Strike

(1924, Dir. by Sergei Eisenstein, B&W, 94 min.). *Strike* began one of the most illustrious careers in the history of cinema, a wildly impressive first feature from the fledgling director Eisenstein. *Strike* was originally intended to be an episode in a series depicting various aspects of the revolutionary struggle before 1917. Deviating from the didactic scheme that had been planned by the party ideologues, Eisenstein turned the film into a dynamic experimental production that had its roots in his theatrical work and contained the seeds of a style that he would further develop in his future films, including *October* and *Battleship Potemkin*. Eisenstein's methods are both complex and extraordinary, his decision to make the film's hero "the masses" instead of a single individual lends the film a truly epic sweep. The vicious caricatures of the bourgeois capitalists make for wit and effectively powerful emotional manipulation. The editing, which is rapid, fluid, and razor-sharp, provides not only pace but a myriad of metaphorical meanings that extend way beyond mere propaganda.

As would become his life-long habit, Eisenstein approached the filming with a great deal of preparation. He spent months researching the script with scientific thoroughness, and several more weeks writing the initial script. Upon shooting, he was just beginning to grasp the intricacies of film technique, aiming above all to achieve a "montage of shocks" as an outgrowth of stage experiments with a "montage of attractions." He was lucky to have as cameraman the talented Edward Tisse, who helped teach the new director; his close collaboration lasted through most of Eisenstein's career.

The reactions of critics to *Strike* in February 1925 was mixed. Pravda called it "the first revolutionary creation of our cinema," but other reviewers cried deviationism. Today, it is considered one of the most vital and influential works in the whole of cinema. Its relentless energy and invention creates a raucous, rousing hymn to human dignity and courage. Kino On Video presents the definitive version of this film, digitally remastered and featuring a dynamic, uplifting score by the Alloy Orchestra.

(For more information contact Kino On Video via telephone (212) 629-6880, or FAX (212) 714-0871, or by way of home computer technology at <http://www.kino.com>)

Samson in the Wax Museum

(Directed by Alfonso Gornoblake, English language version directed by Manuel San Fernando. With Samson (El Santo), Claude Brook, Norma Mora, Reuben Rojo, Roxanne Bellini. 1963, black and white)

There are still, amazingly, American cinephiles who are unacquainted with the Mexican genre of wrestling superheroes. Some of the many people who have seen these surprising films have written in the pages of magazines solely devoted to unorthodox film-making, and they regard them with a very condescending attitude. Some will admit to liking, if at all, the films of El Santo for their supposed "camp" value, or because they enjoy "bad" movies.

Is it not time for a new way of assessing the quality of movies? This film, far from being "bad," is far superior to the thoughtless, vulgar, uninspired product that is churned out nowadays by the mercenary hacks who serve the low-minded Hollywood factory. This film forwards the notion of instant cinema, moviemaking that is free of rigid narrative inhibitions, that is so simple, universal, and compelling that it appeals directly to the subconscious mind.

The plot centers around a tragic villain who was so traumatized by his confinement at Dachau that he can now, years later, find a perverse solace only in torturing others and experiencing firsthand their anguish. His avowed goal, "Now I intend to create a world in

which all humans are deformed. I'll go on and sooner or later I'll turn humanity into a planet of monsters, like plagues and war and hunger and mass killings." He has developed a strange scientific process for accomplishing this feat.

It befalls Samson, "a strange man and a good one", to contend with this malevolent scheme. Along the way, of course, there are some very engaging wrestling matches.

The horror of this film is real, present not just in the macabre aspect of the villain's secret underground laboratory and the freakish creatures he keeps, but in the psychological element, the sad plight of the victim who becomes the victimizer. There are several scenes towards the film's end, wherein the villain prepares for the gruesome fate of a girl he has captured, that are truly disconcerting.

The action sequences, the mystery element, the superheros, the horror, all are blended expertly into an overall experience of conscious and sub-conscious enjoyment.

Also, there is one other quality to this film that recommends it strongly. To see a true hero, a man who rises to the occasion to be what he must, is a jolt of simple truth amidst the visual wasteland of moral indifference. Viewers are inspired by El Santo, and challenged to find in their own selves the strength to fight for good; students of film and aspiring filmmakers are likewise challenged to follow the lead of this work, and abandon modern notions of aesthetic merit and narrative inhibitions, for they are dead like stones. The people should react to this film, and in that reacting find the means by which to create a better world. A thousand years from now the current crop of Academy Award® contenders will be dust, forgotten, reviled, and students of cinema will still be discussing the exploits of El Santo. There is an interchange at the film's end that is so plain and direct that it takes on a new subtlety, and becomes a rallying cry.

"In my opinion you're an amazing man."

"I only do what I can to wipe out injustice and crime."

Reviewed by J. Marcel Bedard

Branded to Kill

(1967. Directed by Seijun Suzuki. With Jo Shishido, Koji Nanbara, Isao Tawagawa, Anne Marie. A Nikkatsu Picture, presented by Janus films.)

The casual viewer may be shocked out of his or her

complacency by the relentless imagination of this cool, eccentric work of Japanese crime cinema.

The plot, such as it can be properly explained, concerns a hitman, Hanada, who is ranked as number three killer according to a hierarchy topped by "phantom number one." Hanada, who "has a peculiar quirk...he likes the smell of boiling rice better than anything else..." is in need of money; his unfaithful wife has spent a great deal on herself and he has used the rest on high living. He accepts a job to escort "a big shot of a certain organization" from Sagami Beach to Nagano for five million yen.

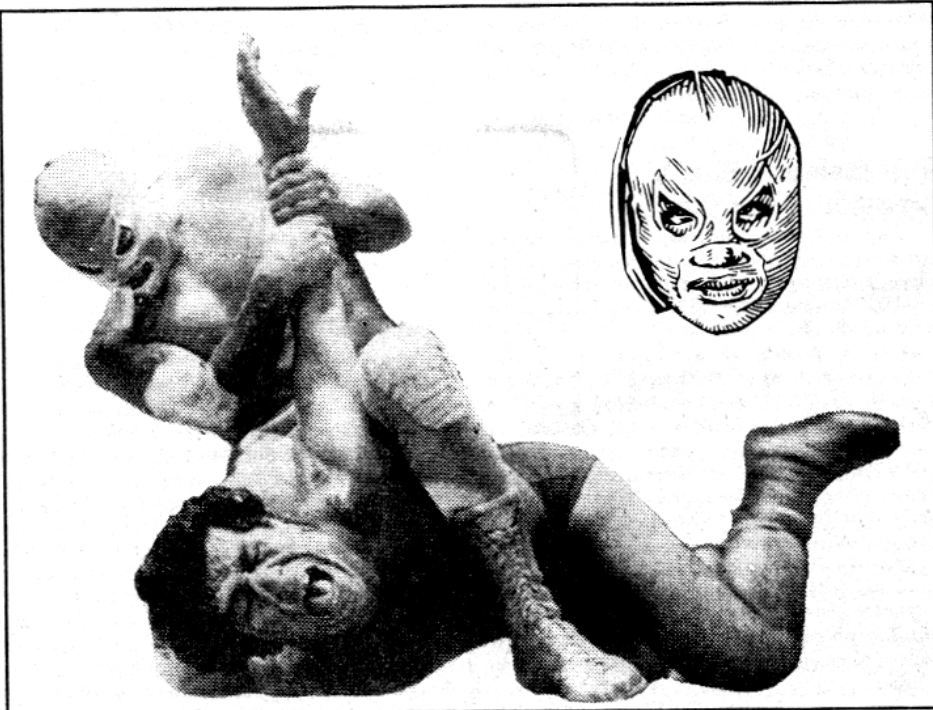
The story changes, strangely and dramatically, when he encounters a very unusual young woman who hires him to make a hit. From there, the audience has to see for itself to believe or understand.

The film balances strong and clever—though not gory—violence, raw psychological drama, and very dark humor. Like nothing most people could imagine, the beautiful imagery of the film (with photography by K. Nagatsuka) creates a compelling, hypnotizing, constantly engaging mixture of action and reflection. Also of note is the film's score, some kind of great offbeat jazz. (Composed by N. Yamamoto.)

Though it is Suzuki, with his obviously very individualistic approach, who must, and will, get most of the credit for this film, the actor Jo Shishido must be commended as well for portraying the hitman Hanada in such a way as to create a very real presence, in no way a predictable "type," and to Anne Mari for her strange, cool nonchalance as the woman he meets and can't forget. Days after you've seen the film it is hard not to see their faces.

For the last few years crime films have proliferated in this country, a cycle set into motion by Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, but most have lacked the interest of these two; most have been rendered in the paint-by-number style of genuine Hollywood, ever undimmed by the shadow of originality. Given the public appetite one would think that *Branded To Kill* could be a runaway hit if even now it was introduced to American theaters, but given the limited tolerance modern audiences have for anything that doesn't absolutely fulfill their expectations, it is, sadly, obvious why Suzuki and his works are largely ignored, and obvious also why films this different and this good aren't being made, at least for the most part. *Cult Movies* contributor Chris D. wrote of his bemusement, or astonish-

(continued)



ment, that Suzuki is not a more celebrated director in this country. As sad or strange as this public indifference is, anyone who has suffered a recent Hollywood release will know why it is the case. For the viewer who wants something different, this is it.

Reviewed by J. Marcel Bedard

Dimension of Blood/ Monster in the Garage

(1995/1996): This double feature, written and directed by Oregon filmmaker Joe Sherlock, is an example of some creative ingenuity at the micro-budget level. You know that when the feature is introduced by a disembodied floating head doing a Criswell impression that the following video isn't going to be all that serious. In the first story Dr. Thomas Mobius investigates the origins of strange lifeforms discovered in South America—and becomes involved with some very weird goings on involving government agents, mutants and those pesky "MIBs" that tend to pop up in alien movies. Actor Tom Shaffer is very believable in the lead as the befuddled scientist. There's also plenty of well done gratuitous gore to spice up this concoction. The second story, *Monster In The Garage*, while entertaining, is a bit long with the party sequence. But once the dimstore monster comes along is pretty damn hilarious. The part with the alien savior speaking Japanese instead of English through its translator had me in stitches.

Reviewed by Kevin Lindenmuth

Gargoyle Girls

(Jo-La Indie-Tainment, 1998): Loe LaPenna, probably best known for his effects work on *Tales From The Darkside* and Carl J. Sukenick's *Alien Beasts*, makes his feature debut about two female gargoyles who are released from their supernatural imprisonment after five hundred years by a would-be magician. In gargoyle form they have horns, sloping foreheads and batlike wings and fly around New York City in computer generated form. When they transform into their human guises they are two ladies, one a blonde (Sasha Graham portraying the good one), the other a brunette (Sonja Ray as the evil one). The good gargoyle befriends the magician while the bad one goes her own way, killing several people in the city. There's lots of exposition between the two leads, a typical "fish out of water" story, and finally a confrontation between the gargoyles high above the city via some cool special effects. The poor choice of the male leade, Michael D'Asaro, who is extremely irritating and nonacting, brings the film down a few dozen notches with his "portrayal" of a sensitive goombah. There's also some of the most jarring continuity problems I can recollect seeing in a

movie. For example, when Graham transforms into a gargoyle her hair is brown but when in human form she is blonde—which changes to brunette by the end of the movie. But the good points of the film outweigh its faults. The effects and title sequence are decent and ambitious for a low-budget project. The two female leads are great. Sasha Graham upgrades the project in portraying the very likeable Gwendolyn gargoyle and Sonja Ray is extremely good in portraying the evil Diana—she was born to play a villain if anyone ever was! All in all, a movie done halfway right.

Reviewed by Kevin Lindenmuth

The Lost World

(Trimark, 1998): This movie has a great start, with an adventurer and his guide attacked by these really nasty, batlike lizards, which devour them like airborne piranhas. The guide is slaughtered and the adventurer is fatally wounded. But before he dies he tells his friend, Professor Challenger, about his discovery of a "Lost World" and makes him promise to go there and tell the world about his amazing discovery. Challenger promptly goes back to England and manages to get independent financing for a trip to Mongolia (where the movie takes place). Along for the ride is a rival naturalist, the daughter of the adventurer who was killed, a news reporter, and a colleague from the University who is out to disprove Challenger's theory of living dinos. On the way to this lost world they encounter bad weather and eventually a tribe of Neanderthals, who look remarkably like Klingons. They eventually come to a plateau, construct a large helium balloon with the equipment they brought, and sail up and over to the Lost World. Before you can say "predictable" some large pterodactyls attack them and the balloon plummets to the tropical forest below. The next forty minutes or so are filled with a lot of exposition about a lost tribe who had built a city and enslaved the Neanderthals and lots of talk about the environment and extinction, which is completely out of place and anachronistic in this period piece film. People seventy years ago weren't "PC"! I kept on waiting for the dinosaurs, which are few and far between. Although they can't compete with the dinosaurs of another *Lost World*, the filmmakers did come up with a cool idea. Because these dinosaur species have survived these past seventy million years they continued to evolve. For example, the brontosaurus they encounter has armor to protect its body and the T-rex has much longer forearms so it can grab and swat at people.

One by one these cliched characters meet their ends in some surprisingly violent and bloody deaths that don't seem to match the tone of the rest of the movie. My biggest problem with this movie version is that Professor Challenger isn't going on this adventure for himself

but for his slain friend, which diminishes his drive. And when he whines about what a mess he's gotten everyone in he becomes just as weak as the other characters, who you really don't care about. The only excitement they give to the movie is when they're ripped to shreds by the T-Rex! Challenger and the woman (a blonde, of course) escape, leaving behind the news reporter who they thought dead. When the two survivors reach civilization they make the announcement that they did not discover a lost world after all.

Reviewed by Kevin Lindenmuth

Sore Losers

(Big Broad Guerrilla Monster, 1997): This movie has a bit of everything in it, from '50s hoodlums to aliens to supra-dimensions to hippies; a cross between a David Lynch and a Charlie Pinion film—maybe a little weirder. Blackie, a human looking alien dressed in '50s style, returns to Earth forty two years after his first visit to finish his original mission of killing a total of twelve victims. He needs three more killings, then he can go home. He eventually meets up with a few friends and trouble begins. One of them, Kerine, kills her parents and Blackie finds out that the deaths count as if he had killed them, bringing the count to 13, one more than he was supposed to get. Now, in order to go home he must take back the 13th death by killing someone that "The Elder," his boss, chooses. But this turns out to be the girlfriend of the friend he's travelling with. About this time the "Men in Black" show up and kidnap this woman—and Blackie must get her back and kill her before they do. There's also a decent soundtrack, available on CD. If you're looking for the type of movie you've never seen before this is the ticket! Expect something different. The distributors can be reached at <http://shoga.wva.com/~turkey/bbgm.html>

Reviewed by Kevin Lindenmuth

I'll See You In Hell

(1960, Italian title: *Ti Aspettero All'Inferno*). Directed by Pierre King (Piero Regnoli). Script by Pierre King (Piero Regnoli), Dario Ferra (Dario Ferra), Arpad DeRiso (DeRiso doesn't receive a credit in the U.S. print, but Italian sources list him. Photography by Lucien Trasatti (Luciano Trasatti), Music by Joseph Piccolo (Giuseppe Piccolo). Cast: Massimo Serato, Eva Bartok, John Drew Barrymore, Max Knight, Anthony Fredricks, Ronald Singer, Myra Orphi (Moirae Orfei), Anthony Vines, Leonard Portal, Mario Passey, Ronald Terr, Barbara Frances.)

Piero Regnoli was a film critic and scripter before directing his first film in 1957. Some of his films are *Playgirls* and *the Vampire* (1960) and *Maciste In King Solomon's Mines* (1964). Regnoli stepped out of the director's chair in 1974 to once again become a full time scenarist.

Regnoli was a competent director and he usually delivered a watchable product. Along with *Playgirls* and *the Vampire*, *I'll See You In Hell* is Regnoli's best work.

Diamond thieves Alan, Sam and Walter head for the safety of a small village to split their take. En route, Sam sinks in quicksand. Soonafter, Daniele Martin (Eva Bartok) enters the picture. Her presence has the edgy Walter (John Drew Barrymore, who is Drew's dad) more nervous. (Walter was responsible for Sam's demise.) Alan, however, is smitten with Ms. Martin. Tensions mount as it seems Sam wants revenge from beyond the grave.

This film unfolds like a good episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. Regnoli's subtle direction, backed by the capable b&w photography of prolific Luciano Trasatti (*The Bloody Pit of Horror*, *Ursus In the Land of Fire*, and tons more), allow the characters center stage. Alan, Daniele and Walter form an intriguing psychological triangle, one that reeks in isolation and sadness. I'll spare you my dimstore analysis.

A double surprise ending caps the film; the first

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in
THE
BIG NOISE

20
CENTURY FOX
PICTURE

with DORIS MERRICK
ARTHUR SPACE • VEDA ANN BORG

Directed by Mal St. Clair
Produced by Sol M. Wurtzel



good as Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*, the film by which it was inspired. Across the country the shelves of rental outlets are filled with spaghetti westerns, left over, many of them, from the early days of home video, deceptively packaged with cover illustrations intended to hide their foreign origins. The new breed of cinephile should seek these out, or order as many as he or she can from one or more of the different mail order outfits that are proliferating nowadays—many of them in the pages of this magazine.

Reviewed by J. Marcel Bedard

The Big Noise

(1944. Directed by Mal St. Clair. With Stan Laurel & Oliver Hardy, Arthur Space, Veda Ann Borg, Doris Merrick. Fox Home Video.)

Just mention *The Big Noise* to a fervent Laurel & Hardy fan, and you'll witness a lot of revulsion unlike any since Van Helsing slashed a crucifix at Count Dracula. Then brace yourself for a lecture about how wretched the post-Hal Roach L&H films are, about how 20th Century Fox in particular went to great lengths to sabotage the team, and how their reputation as reliable laugh-makers was forever ruined.

That's all fine and well, if you don't mind a little fact-bending to support these opinions. Though the Fox product would have benefited tremendously had the studio made more allowances for Stan Laurel's behind-the-camera input, it's ridiculous to claim that a deliberate attempt was made to sabotage the team's career. And while the duo's 1940s comedies are definitely among their weakest, the resulting films are not en-

tirely without interest, or laughs. The fact that these pictures turned a profit is often (and conveniently) overlooked; the films are certainly not in the same league as their classic comedies, but they apparently pleased SOMEBODY. *The Bullfighters*, released by Fox in 1945, was their last American film because Stan and Ollie decided to call it quits—not the studios or the moviegoing public. That they were able to survive as a screen team for nearly twenty years, in spite of the later standard entries and the rise of Abbott & Costello, says a lot about their staying power.

During their years at the Hal Roach studio, Laurel & Hardy turned out one brilliant comedy after another. Efforts like *Two Tars* (1928), *Liberty* (1929), *Big Business* (1929), *Hog Wild* (1930), *Helpmates* (1931), *The Music Box* (1932), *Sons of the Desert* (1934), and *Way Out West* (1937), are bonafide comic masterpieces. After *Saps at Sea* (1940), their last Roach production, the boys signed with 20th Century-Fox. Beginning with the uneven *Great Guns* (1941), the Fox films mark an overall decline in the quality of their work. For years, many fans and scholars have dismissed the entire group as "unwatchable."

To the dismay of "purists," there's a growing number of admirers who believe their '40s efforts haven't been given a fair shake. To be sure, *A-Haunting We Will Go* (Fox, 1945) is a near-complete waste of time, and *Nothing But Trouble* (MGM, 1944) seems more like *Nothing But Tedium*. However, the others offer moments of fun—fleeting moments, perhaps, but undeniable fun nonetheless.

Which brings us back to *The Big Noise*, usually singled out as the absolute rock-bottom, get-out-the-

trash-bag, stinkeroo L&H picture. It isn't, not by a long shot. But because of the automatic knee-jerk rejection of the film by many L&H historians, the picture's merits (albeit relatively few) have gone unheralded.

Stan and Ollie play janitors who pass themselves off as detectives when Prof. Alva Hartley (Arthur Space), an eccentric inventor, wants someone to guard his new bomb, "The Big Noise." Hartley's house is rigged with an assortment of push-button gadgets that confuse the boys, though not as much as Hartley's family, which include an obnoxious brat (former *Our Gang* member and future *In Cold Blood* star Bobby Blake) and dotty aunt (Esther Howard). When a gang of crooks decide to steal the bomb and sell it to enemy agents, Stan and Ollie head to Washington with a "decoy" bomb. En route, of course, they discover they're actually in possession of the genuine article, and desperately try to elude the crooks, who are now in hot pursuit.

Unlike other L&H features from this period, *The Big Noise* doesn't saddle the team with a lot of unnecessary baggage. The boy-girl subplot involving Arthur Space and Fox contract starlet Doris Marrick is kept to a minimum (it would have been difficult to turn Space's goofy character into a true romantic lead), and there are no specialty acts or musical numbers to pad out the length. Most of the time, the focus is squarely on the comedians. There are fond throwbacks to earlier routines, as they present their on-going mix-up of derbies, and such familiar bits as Ollie climbing a signpost and discovering a "WET PAINT" sign at the top.

On the other hand, the film is almost too full of outlines. While one can admire the sheer quantity of gags, quality is a different matter, as the gags are heaped upon one another with little rhyme or reason. Even in their most plotless films, the humor sprang from their unique brand of illogical logic. Here, they're a couple of dolts who simply wander through a succession of events.

Laurel, the creative force behind the team, was accustomed to the freedom afforded him at the Hal Roach studio. At Roach, Stan went to great lengths to make sure the material was played for maximum impact. If a gag didn't come off properly, there was little hesitation on Laurel's part to refilm it completely. At Fox, the comedian was confronted by a Hollywood studio system at the height of its powers. This system, which wasn't sympathetic to an actor's creative suggestions to begin with, valued deadlines over aesthetics, and any suggestion that might throw production off schedule—even to the slightest degree—was summarily rejected.

Accordingly, Stan often seems listless in the post-Roach films. Frustrated by his lack of input and supervision, Stan's performances are indifferent; most of the time, he comes across merely as an actor-for-hire, which was, no doubt, Fox's shortsighted view of this gifted filmmaker.

Amidst these creative constrictions, however, Oliver Hardy rises to the challenge. Much of the contrived material isn't worthy of him, but you'd never know it to watch his enthusiastic performance. His "camera looks" (glancing at the audience, registering surprise or dismay over something Stan's done) are often hilarious, and his energy level makes old and stale gags seem fresh and funny. Ironically, Hardy's attempts to make the best of a generally bad situation distinguishes *The Big Noise* as one of his shining hours.

The Big Noise is available as part of Fox Video's discount "selections" series. The video transfer, taken from 35mm material, is breathtaking; while it may not be the best L&H comedy on the market, it's certainly one of the best-looking.

After it's all said and done, the film is not an entirely unpleasant way to kill 74 minutes. While it's a far cry from *Way Out West*, and frequently squanders the talents of this truly great comedy team, *The Big Noise* doesn't deserve all the scorn hurled its way. Their worst film? Hardly. Try sitting through *Be Big or The Laurel & Hardy Murder Case*. One of the worst comedies ever made? No. Not as long as Pauly Shore keeps

Reviewed by Ted Okuda

Days of Wrath

(1967. Directed by Tonino Valerli. With Lee Van Cleef, Giuliano Gemma, Walter Rilla, Christa Linder, Ennio Balbo, Lukas Ammann, Al Mulock, Yvonne Sanson. Available from Sinister Cinema.)

"When you wound a man you'd better kill him, or sooner or later he's gonna kill you."

The philosophy of the Eurowestern, delivered in cold direct fashion by the dangerous gunman Frank Talby (Lee Van Cleef) to his eager young disciple, Scott Mary (Giuliano Gemma.) Talby rides into the corruption-filled town of Clifton and finds Scott, an angry young man with no parents, no background, who empties the chamber pots of the citizens and sweeps up their garbage, constantly subjected to their scorn and belittlement. His only friends are Murph, the old-timer who taught him how to shoot, and a one-eyed vagabond who is as maligned and mistreated by the townfolk as is Scott himself. It isn't long before the aging Talby has taken Scott under his wing.

The story that follows is an exciting tale of greed, revenge, hypocrisy, and conflict—the conflict between youth and age, student and teacher, conscience and instinct, right and wrong, the basic elements of compelling drama. The plot is straightforward but not unsophisticated, and by the end the confrontation that has been made inevitable really grabs the viewer. Everything about the film, from the memorable score by Riz Ortolani to the beautiful photography of Enzo Serafin, should make it a must see for any fan of the spaghetti western. Even those who normally don't prefer a Mediterranean origin for their six-gun thrills should give this film a look; its high production values and effective acting, as well as the gripping story, make

it highly accessible, probably more so than many of its kind. *Days of Wrath* has earned a reputation by fans of the genre as a classic, and rightfully so.

Special credit should be given to Lee Van Cleef, an underrated actor whose cool onscreen persona lent an air of menace and intensity to many spaghetti westerns, his stock-in-trade in the late sixties and early seventies. Many will remember him from the second and third film of Sergio Leone's "Dollars" trilogy, and *Cult Movies* fans are likely to know him from the offbeat scientist character he portrayed in the Corman masterpiece *It Conquered The World*. It is his performance as Talby, the aging, self-assured gunfighter who goes to extreme lengths to provide for his retirement, that really provides the film's center. Giuliano Gemma's performance complements Van Cleef's very well, and the relationship between the two emerges as a fascinating study of contrasts and comparisons; both need each other, but each stands in the way of the path the other must take.

Simple, direct, beautiful, visual poetry in techniscope, slick and violent, a valuable cinematic experience, for some a necessary one.

Based on the novel *Der Tod Ritt Dienstags*, by Ron Barker, the film is a German-Italian co-production.

(From Sinister Cinema. There is also a version of this offered by Video Search of Miami. The VSOM edition is a widescreen letterboxed print, featuring English subtitles and sixteen extra minutes of footage. I have yet to obtain this original European cut; the extra running time should explain the seeming importance given to a particular female character who, in the American edition, appears only briefly, yet gets a prominent billing. I am interested to see how the reversal of dubbing, an Italian voice put in for Van Cleef and no English put in for Gemma, will alter the overall experience.)

Reviewed by J. Marcel Bedard

The Crier

(1998. Corey Elias, Erica Owens, Jason McComb, Lorena Gutierrez. Directed by Glynn Beard. 82 min, color. Distributed by EI Entertainment)

A two-hundred-year-old witch offers a young man a love potion to bring him back together with the girl of his dreams. The young man invites his friends to a party to celebrate the happy re-union. Then the terror begins as guests begin vanishing.

Director Beard manages to evoke truly sinister moods from natural forest and lakeside settings. The film often borrows to good effect, fast motion, shadow, and negative tricks seen in the early German horror films. The youthful cast does a good job interpreting the intended spookery. Cinematography of foggy marshes, spider webs, and lonely country roads is perfect for the situations. Some startling special effects turn up in the second half of the film.

Reviewed by Gino Colbert

Decay

(1998. Written & directed by Jason Stephens. With Harold Cannon, Angelica Hayden. 90 min, color. From Cinematrix Releasing, 22647 Ventura Blvd., Suite 352, Woodland Hills, CA 91364)

Does the Decay in the title refer to the moral decay of the characters? Or is it merely tooth decay as portrayed in the opening dentist office scene? Almost everyone in this film is in some state of psychological degeneration.

Katherine wants to party with the low-life topless bar owner Ronnie (played by Raymond Storti from *Full Contact* and *Amazon Warrior*). Ronnie knows of Katherine's husband and plans to have him done away with, thus contacts a serial killer who has been stalking an exotic model (played by *Playboy Magazine* cover-

(continued)

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girl Christine Lydon, featured in *Jackie Brown*). But Ronnie doesn't know that the husband was tied to the Mafia. When the hubby turns up dead and three million dollars in Mafia narcotics are missing, International action star Robert Z'dar (*Tango and Cash*, *Maniac Cop*) leads the Mafia hit men to even the score in a shocking fashion. In the telling of this tale we see plenty of breasts, lots of them big, round and very photogenic.

Reviewed by Gino Colbert

The Coven

(1997, Northwest Productions): In this 40-minute black & white film, Mike, a drug-dependent, alcohol-soaked writer, reluctantly joins a support group to help deal with his problem. He does this at the urging of a friend. While at first these meetings seem your typical AA meeting, things start getting a little weird when hooded figures start attacking him, which may or may not be a part of his substance abused state of mind. And as he goes to the meetings, unwilling to participate and often stealing away to the bathroom to take a few drinks, the participant's monologues become more disturbing and not exactly helpful. He soon connects the hooded figures with the group, who he thinks will never let him leave. It eventually ends with a violent and bloody encounter. The grainy black and white photography and starkness of the Wisconsin landscape emphasize Mike's alienation and paranoia and the casting of *The Coven* hits the nail on the head. After watching this you'll think twice about going to any self help group. Especially if you're paranoid...

Reviewed by Kevin J. Lindenmuth

Haunted

(1998 Directed by Dennis Devine, Produced by Ray Storti, Mike Bowler, Eugene James. Screenplay by Steve Jarvis. Starring Peter Tomarken, Suzan Spann, Yvette McClelland. 91 minutes, color. Available from Cinematrix Releasing.)

The film opens on a peculiar seance that is quickly exposed as a fraud by an astute ghost buster. Quickly the storyline shifts to a haunted theater where a series of unusual murders has taken place. What follows is a clever plot involving the production of an entire play which may actually be haunted! Except for the obligatory cheesecake scene of softcore sex, this is the kind of Gothic horror and suspense combination that could make a good soap opera, after the fashion of the *Dark Shadows* TV show of the 1960s. A group of talented artists have made this a nice, spooky tale. From Cinematrix Releasing.

Reviewed by Gino Colbert

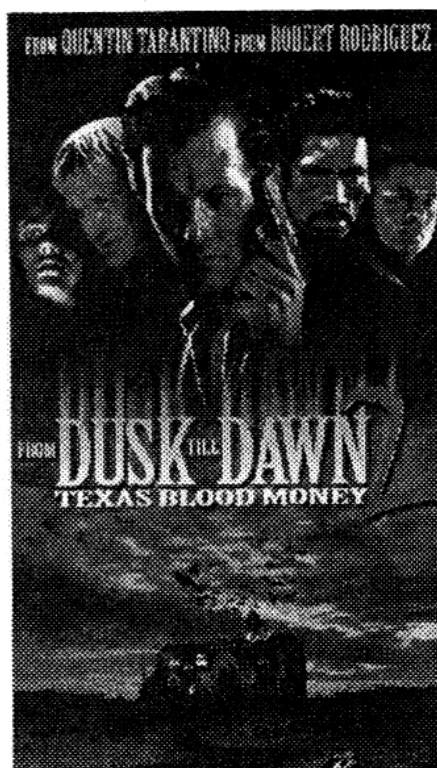
When Time Expires

(1996, Showtime Original Movie/Evergreen Ent.): Travis Beck (Richard Grieco), a humanoid planetary investigator, has a job to do on Earth. In three days he is to put a quarter in a parking meter in a small town and thus prevent worldwide nuclear annihilation. But three assassins, also sent from the future, want to prevent him from doing this because they don't want Earth to join the union of federated planets, which will happen in the future if Beck accomplishes his mission. In these three days he also meets and falls in love with June Kelly (Cynthia Geary), whose father is actually an alien like Beck. When she asks Beck if all aliens are human he replies "Yes. It's a popular model." Of course, the good guy wins, the Earth is saved, and he gets the girl via some additional time travelling.

Reviewed by Kevin J. Lindenmuth

From Dusk Till Dawn II: Texas Blood Money

Sequels are always a tricky business. Let's face it, if a film is a classic, a follow-up is usually twice as hard



to pull off. In some cases, sequels turn out to be better than the original. But any way you cut it, sequels have always been a crapshoot.

In the case of *From Dusk Till Dawn II*, *Texas Blood Money*, the sequel issue becomes a moot point. Because other than one character, which is Razor Charlie (played by Danny Trejo), who now has a nom de plume of Razor Eddie, and a certain infamous bar known as the Tittie Twister, this film is a work unto itself.

From its movie-within-a-movie beginning, this film is a roller coaster romp through a vampire-infested Mexico by five Texas bank robbers who heist a Mexican bank, stuffed to overflowing with laundered drug money. Wouldn't you just know it, these Lone Star state desperados encounter vampires.

Some viewers could ask what sets this film apart from any other western vampire pictures (if you can find one, other than Universal's *Curse of the Undead*), and this reviewer is happy to report there is a plethora of reasons.

Texas Blood Money, from a story by Quentin Tarantino, Scott Spiegel, and Boaz Yakin, is an homage to everything from Hitchcock to Hammer, with an ample pinch of classic Universal horror and a hyper-imaginative visual approach.

Spiegel and cinematographer Phillip Lee have designed a cinematic funhouse ride, which with taut pacing and snappy dialogue guarantees high tension, thrills, and plenty of blood, gore, violence and gratuitous sex. Add to that, stunt work and action reminiscent of the great Republic serials, with a soundtrack dominated by Dick Dale, King of the Surf Guitar, and you've got a pretty cool movie! And that's where the cast comes into play.

The protagonist, Buck, is portrayed by Robert Patrick, who is featured in *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, *The Last Action Hero*, *Wayne's World*, *Fire In The Sky*, *The Faculty*, *Die Hard 2* and Roger Corman's *Hollywood Boulevard II*. His partner in crime is played by Duane Whitaker, who is best known for his performance as Maynard in Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*. (Whitaker co-wrote the screenplay for *Texas Blood Money*.) He plays Luther, the mastermind behind the south-of-the-border bank job. Whitaker's other screen credits include *Eddie Presley*, which he also starred in, and Director Dan Golden's production of *Striptease* for Roger Corman.

Veteran actor Bo Hopkins plays the hell-bent Texas sheriff Otis Lawson, who pursues Buck and the gang before and during the Mexican bank robbery. Hopkins is remembered for his classic role in Alan Parker's chilling *Midnight Express*. He has appeared in such films as Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch*, starred in two of Peckinpah's films—*Killer Elite*, and *The Getaway*. He has also appeared in *American Graffiti*, *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*, *Day of the Locust*, and Kirk Douglas' *Posse*. He has appeared in numerous television shows, such as *Charlie's Angels*, *Rockford Files*, and *Dynasty*.

Raymond Cruz plays Jesus, the ice cool Chicano who raises pit bull puppies on treadmills and steroids. Cruz has played featured roles in *Alien: Resurrection*, *Clear and Present Danger*, *Under Siege*, *Upclose and Personal*, and *The Substitute*. Brett Harrelson plays Ray Bob with a touch of innocence until he becomes a god-awful bloodsucking vampire.

While this show is a direct-to-video release, there have been some midnight screenings of *Texas Blood Money*. While the video version is highly satisfying, it's a pity that this film did not see general release, because this is one of those films that should be seen on the wide screen for the fill impact, as it is paced much like writer/director Spiegel's work with Sam Raimi on *Evil Dead II*.

This film is not recommended for the faint of heart, or squeamish, but is just what the mad doctor ordered if the viewer is in the mood for a butt-kicking vampire movie.

Reviewed by Jan Alan Henderson

Six-String Samurai

(90 minutes) This is an HSX film production by Lance Mungia and Jeffrey Falcon that won the Kodak Vision Award for the best cinematography and the In Sync Speed Razor Award for editing. The film is original and well done. Jeffrey Falcon plays Buddy, the six-string hero of the title who saves a newly orphaned kid, Justin McGuire, from a group of marauders. The kid decides to follow Buddy despite Buddy's apparent dislike of children. To add to the plot, Death personified, along with his groupies, pursues Buddy and the kid, planning to kill them both. It's not unlike ZZ Top with cool shoes chasing down Bruce Lee with child.

As the duo make their way across the wastelands they encounter a cannibalistic *Leave It To Beaver* Cleaver family, Windmill people as well as the Russian Army. The two unlikely companions battle their way past all the obstacles and Buddy, despite his dislike for children, grows fond of the kid, eventually combating Death for the child's soul. With futuristic/primitive art design, beach music soundtrack, and Italian sword-sandal plotline, there's nothing quite like this film!

Six String Samurai is a Palm Pictures film distributed by Ryko Distribution Partners. Order by phone: 1-800-626-1470

Reviewed by Coco Kiyonaga

Choke

(98 minutes, Palm Pictures). Rickson Gracie, undisputed World Freestyle Fighting Champion, is a 7th degree Black Belt Open Class Champion. His technique is considered to be the definitive Jiu Jitsu method in the world. Gracie is remarkably disciplined and determined. A fight to the finish to determine the champion of all disciplines of fighting; kickboxer, wrestler, muay thai, jujitsu, savate, karate, boxer, judo.

Choke follows these top contenders, before, during, and after the 1995 Vale Tudo Fighting Championship, which is the World Cup of hand to hand combat. Not rated, *Choke* contains scenes of graphic violence. Lots of blood and physical pain. Not for the weak. *Choke* is top-notch. Warning: once you start to watch *Choke*, you won't be able to tear yourself away until its over. Eight fighters. One Winner. No rules. Enough said.

Available through Palm Pictures, distributed by

Reviewed by Coco Kiyonaga

deSade

1969, American International Pictures Written by Richard Matheson, Directed by Cy Enfield, Produced by James H. Nicholson and Samuel Z. Arkoff with Keir Dullea, Senta Berger, Lilli Palmer, Anna Massey and John Huston. MPAA rating: X (no one under 16 admitted). Color, 113 minutes.

In Louis Alphonse Donatien, the title of Marquis de Sade comes down to our gentle gun-and-Bible toting society as a metaphor for cruelty and horror. More problematically, in him we confront the twin problems of the relationship between the artist and society (which invents all artists) and the origin of artistic inspiration. In de Sade's case, the artist found his muse in that which his society found (officially) abhorrent. de Sade was born an aristocrat into the comfortable rot of pre-Revolutionary France and absorbed its familiar (to us) values of privilege, hypocrisy, and a settled belief in power for its own sake. The Marquis, in the candid manner of fellow *philosophes* Rousseau and Voltaire, tried to work out a system of critical morality based on the social practices he saw about him and used flesh (his own and others) as a medium of experimentation. Pleasure and pain are simply matters of will, de Sade argued time and again in plays, pamphlets and novels, and what we are encouraged to call "perversion" is simply the joyous realization that the whip can find itself into *anyone's* hand. "Imagination is the only truth" was both his credo and a nice bit of unheeded prophecy for a social order already rehearsing for the tumbril and head-basket.

By the late sixties, AIP was in the fat part of the post-Production Code boom in counterculture filmmaking. Roger Corman's *The Wild Angels* and *The Trip* demonstrated the commercial viability of stories of



rebels and outlaws and the studio committed itself to more and wilder variations on the same themes. Richard Matheson's script, a complex and brilliant parable suggesting that de Sade's rebellion was simply an ego-mirror distortion of the world that made him was quite a comfortable fit for the director of *The Masque Of The*

Red Death and *X-Man With X-Ray Eyes*.

"We worked out a rather intricate flashback structure" Corman remembered to Mark McGee, in *Roger Corman: The Best of the Cheap Acts*, "I stayed with it through the first draft." The director walked away from the project because he thought "the picture was a trap. If we tried to show what de Sade did, or as Dick Matheson and I did some of his fantasies, we'd be arrested. And if we *didn't* show it, the audience was going to be cheated. They were going to be cheated because of the title and the way I knew American International would sell the picture." Michael Reeves, director of the masterly *Witchfinder General*, was hired and (after he began shock therapy) replaced by black-list survivor Cy Enfield (*Mysterious Island*). Filming in Berlin, Enfield saw the film through to the last few days and had a nervous breakdown, at which point Corman stepped in to complete the shooting.

As one might predict, the resulting film is a fascinating mess which both transcends the circumstances of its creation and wallows riotously in the most ludicrous AIP cheez-teez effects. The narrative is a series of flashbacks stages for the fugitive Marquis (Keir Dullea) by his leering uncle, the Abbe (John Huston, bellowing and sawing the air like a wizened, elderly monkey). We follow the troubled origin and scandalous career of de Sade with particular attention paid to his rebellion against (and eventual submergence into) the swinishness of the world around him. The most important lesson is one learned in boyhood, as he is held and beaten by his depraved uncle and near-orgasmic mother. "It matters little what one *does*" hisses the Abbe, "as long as one presents the face of virtue to the world." Honesty is, of course, the worst crime imaginable, and the film manages to make the salutary point that de Sade's writings were what made him intolerable.

Along the way, we are treated to orgies that resemble something out of a late-sixties Playboy picto-

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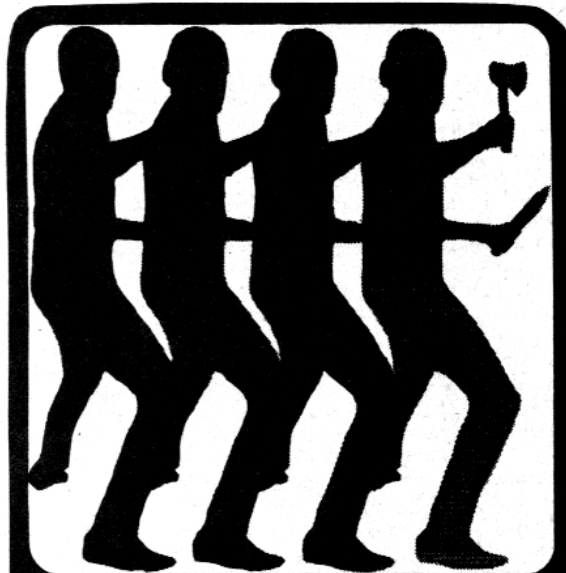
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rial, a hilarious Les Baxter-ish score that is pure cocktail/Hi-Fi funtime off your grandparent's stereo, and some of the weirdest credits ever to roll across a screen ("Music by Billy Strange, Cinematography by Richard Angst"). In an orgy sequence, de Sade licks jam off a lover's breast, so AIP hit upon the idea of passing out free samples of Smucker's as a promotion at screenings. The folks at the name-brand jellyworks were outraged and ordered the practice stopped. "We never recommended the use of our products in exactly that way," a company spokesperson was reported to have exclaimed to Roger Ebert.

In brief, *de Sade* is woefully underrated fun that repays serious attention by film lovers, especially those who think critical opinion is made by middle-aged men with ulcers. This one can be had from Phil Grodski at Far-Out Flix, 404 Cooper Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603. He'll even throw in the trailer at no extra charge.

Reviewed by Ron Garmon

Wadd: The Life & Times of John C. Holmes

Wadd is a documentary by Cass Paley that explores the life of this pop culture icon. Paley interviews actual people from Holme's past such as the legendary director, Robert Chinn. From his childhood in rural Ohio to his death from AIDS in California, this film attempts to unravel the myths surrounding Holmes. Winner of the 1999 Best Documentary feature at the South By South Film Festival in Austin, Texas. Paley was inspired to tell the real story of Holmes after the romanticized story told in *Boogie Nights*.

To order, contact VCA Pictures: 1-800-718-0202.

Reviewed by Coco Kiyonaga

Vegas Nights

(1954, Continental Pictures). Produced by exploitation filmmaker J.D. Kendis (who was doing fake jungle documentaries, marijuana and girls-in-trouble films a decade before), this vintage black and white feature starts off as a tame travelogue about Las Vegas, but after ten minutes or so soon settles down to presenting a series of dance, comedy, striptease and bump'n' grind acts.

The performers include then-famous Elvira Pagan, "the exotic South American beauty" who sings a Spanish song to accompany her striptease, Mae Flonzell, "Enchanting Dawn," Rita Ravell, and Chili Pepper "the South American cyclone." Two low comics are also featured who do skits about drunkenness and picking up girls while entertaining us with jokes like this:

"You ever been to college?"

"Y'heard of Penn State?"

"Yeah..."

"I just got outta State Pen."

Since this movie runs barely over an hour, a few color shorts of exotic dancers circa 1967 are thrown in, along with two black and white burlesque shorts from the fifties. One of them, "Fire Dance" from the grandly named Hollywood Film Enterprises, is credited to Joe Bonica. Mr. Bonica also ran a talent agency that rounded up some of the performers for *Vegas Nights*.

All in all, an interesting curio, and probably a reasonably accurate representation of what a burlesque show from the fifties was actually like. Available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Rudy Minger

Necromania

(1971, Stacey Films) If you've ever seen *Jail Bait*, you know that Ed Wood was capable of making a standard crime picture. His film *Necromania*, recently rediscovered, shows that Wood was capable of making standard porno...sort of.

I have to admit I've never seen a sex film quite like this one. The picture begins, more or less, with a brief

dialogue scene between a couple, as they slowly undress, that establishes the setting as the home of Madame Heles. The house is seen in a suitably creepy exterior shot. Heles is a "necromancer" who specializes in helping sexually troubled couples. "That still spells witch" the man (Ric Lutze) blurts out, "W-I-T-C-H-I!" The girl (Rene Bond) reminds him it's their last chance, and he reluctantly agrees to go through with it.

The action then shifts to a woman in a very revealing negligee who presses a skull against her bare breasts in a room with red walls, a coffin, a stuffed wolf and some posters with Chinese lettering that are there for no apparent reason. The woman intones, "They are as you suspected—not married. They are ripe for our purposes."

From here the plot goes out the window for a while as we see a series of sexual couplings, accompanied by oddly inappropriate music (a problem that also plagued *Jail Bait*). There's a lot of fondling and nudity but nothing you could call hard-core, though this film would still probably get an NC-17 rating in today's market.

The sex scenes are staged with a bit more imagination than you might expect. Strangely enough, the most erotic scene is a prolonged lesbian encounter between Rene Bond and Marie Arnold that runs for almost ten minutes. Even the music is appropriate here. Afterwards there's a short dialogue exchange: "I feel really strange." "Do you trust in me?" (the other girl nods.) "Then put your whole body and soul into my hands."

The writing, even for an Ed Wood film, often gets rather flowery. Meanwhile Ric Lutze is being seduced by another woman, which lasts only a few seconds before we get to yet another lesbian scene. "Love me, Shirley, love me," a girl moans. Shirley was, of course, Ed Wood's transvestite name, which may explain why he put so much emphasis on these scenes.

Suddenly a gong sounds and we're back in that strange room with the coffin and the wolf. "It is time; bring me the patients," moans an ominous voice-over.

The cast returns to the "red room" (as it's referred to in the script). Before Ric Lutze and his new lover leave the other room they see a red prism-like image of "lost souls" engaging in intercourse; rather an odd special-effect. (Wood seems to have been fond of the color red. *Take It Out In Trade* is splashed with red as well.)

There's more lesbian lovemaking in the red room, which makes Ric Lutze even more apprehensive than he already is. Madame Heles, a fairly attractive redhead, at last makes her appearance from the coffin. Rene Bond is pronounced cured, but Ric Lutze is dragged into the coffin with Madame Heles, where he miraculously recovers his potency.

There is a forward and afterward, photographed by Peter Clark, with filmmaker Frank Henenlotter and Ed Wood author, Rudolph Grey. They discuss the film briefly, but entertainingly.

The print presented here is only 43 minutes long, with scratches in a few scenes. It originally ran about an hour and what's missing is anybody's guess.

Rudolph Grey speculates that there may have been three or four minutes of hard-core footage, and at least two people, writer/editor Charles Anderson and Ric Lutze, believe that Ed Wood had a role in it. Supposedly he did a Hitchcock-type cameo as an evil doctor or wizard character. We can always hope that someday the missing 17 minutes will be found. It might not be as important as finding *London After Midnight*, but it'd still be interesting to see.

The tape also includes an abbreviated 40-minute version of *The Love Feast* (1969) a.k.a. *The Photographer*. Ed Wood wrote the screenplay and played the starring role. The original 63-minute version is also available. Joseph F. Robertson produced and directed according to the credits, which are painted on a nude dancer. Ed plays Mr. Murphy, a nudie photographer, and delivers an amusing performance as he photographs and is eventually overwhelmed by a number of naked women. The end is somewhat jarring, though, as

his models turn on him and force him into a nightie, heels, and a dog collar. Still, Ed wrote the script and presumably knew what he was getting into, if you'll pardon the expression.

Available from Something Weird Video, part of the Frank Henenlotter "Sexy Shockers" series.

Reviewed by Rudy Minger

Cracked Nuts

I don't know about you, but, the older I get, the more I have to rely on associative knowledge. That's when a certain thing will remind you of a certain other thing (and so on, down the line), until your mind settles on the one item you should have thought of in the first place. In *The Strange Case of Doctor Rx*, for example, comic Mantan Moreland is forced to depend upon associative knowledge in order to realize that he wants breakfast. I'm not that bad, yet—my stomach still rules the roost around here—but occasionally, I'll allow what's left of my mind to trundle along through the process, with dismaying results.

For instance: Months ago, I was browsing through a file of stills on Karloff's classic, *The Mummy*, and I noticed a shot of Imhotep—still comfortably nestled in his sarcophagus—with his eyes open and wisps of hair atop his ancient cranium. My thoughts turned to Tom Tyler and Lon Chaney, who were enveloped in rubber for most of their terms as Kharis, and then on to other embalmed marauders. A picture of that odd little duck in the galabaya from *The Pharaoh's Curse* popped up next; he had hair for weeks. The mental montage continued until I came to Popoca, the Mexican cinema's shrieking ragbag and titular hero of *La Momia Contra el Robot Humano* (*The Mummy Vs The Human Robot*). Popoca had quite a mop of hair which, in the movie clips that were running through my mind's eye, got transferred to the picture's robot. From there, I flashed forward (or maybe it was backward) to the only mechanical man I knew of who *did* have hair, and so—*Voila!*—*Cracked Nuts*.

So very few people have even heard of *Cracked Nuts* that I could afford to give each of them a quarter to buy their silence. Meant to be a comedy—God knows, it's populated by most of the studio's most adept comic players—the picture just sort of unreels in front of you. Bits meant to be funny are merely stupid, several moments which show promise lose their edge by going on way too long, the decade's racial humor can't possibly play any more embarrassingly, and the pacing is too disjointed to provide any of the momentum needed to build laughs. The story revolves around a (fake) mechanical man, though, and that's why we're wasting neurons here on *Cracked Nuts*.

Flamboyant con man Boris Kabikoff (Mischa Auer) and his blonde-chasing henchman, Eddie (Shemp Howard), have made off with an "incomplete" mechanical man from the Imperial Research Corporation, and are busy concocting the scam of a lifetime. With Eddie inside the metal suit (as "Ivan the Robot"), Kabikoff plans on selling the rights and plans to patent attorney James Mitchell (William Frawley) for big bucks. "Mr. Mitchell will be number one in our sucker parade," the con man boasts.

Con to the pair's delight, Mitchell is completely taken in by "Ivan"; unfortunately, he has also been taken by his ex-wife, Ethel (Astrid Allwyn), and is broke. A sucker is needed, and, providentially, one has just walked through the door. He's Larry Trent (Stu Erwin), winner of \$5,000 in a refrigerator slogan contest ("If it's a Refrigerall refrigerator, it refrigerates!") and the boyfriend of Mitchell's secretary, Sharon (Una Merkel). Mitchell and Kabikoff fast-talk Larry out of his money—forcing the young man to postpone leading his intended back home to Oswego Falls—but as quickly as they get the money, Ethel relieves them of it.

Sharon intercepts a telegram from Warren Benson of the Imperial Research Corporation (Pierre Watkin) in which he warns Mitchell of legal consequences should the patent attorney conspire with the patently

fraudulent Kabikoff. Realizing he's been duped, Larry calls for reinforcements. Down from Oswego Falls come Mayor Smun (Francis Pierlot) and appliance king, Sylvanus Boogie (Will Wright), who represent themselves to Mitchell and Kabikoff as a couple of millionaire investors, ready to back Ivan—and future robots—with all their ready cash. Taking on Ethel in an uneasy truce—she's the only one who can come up with the necessary five grand to repay Larry and get him out of the picture—Mitchell and his fellow swindler assure the “millionaires” of their total exclusivity in the deal.

The climax finds the robot-suited Eddie being chased by the cops, and Mitchell accosted on all sides: he has Kabikoff at his feet, Ethel at his throat, and an angry Benson at his front door. Realizing that the big city is the last place on earth for simple folk like themselves, Larry and Sharon head back to what promises to be the biggest wedding Oswego Falls has ever seen.

There you have it. Interspersed among scenes of Ethel sneaking in and out of her ex-husband's house and some painfully embarrassing stereotypical racial humor involving Mantan Moreland and Hattie Noel, there are vignettes involving Ivan chasing blondes (his eyes light up and bells go off), vacuuming the carpet, and clanking about alongside his wily partner. Although outfitted with a back panel containing gears, pistons and blinking lights (with which to fool the rubes), Ivan is never presented as anything other than a glorious fake. For filmic robot fanciers, the *Cracked Nuts* automaton is a caricature of wild-eyed Mischa Auer, complete with mustache and toupee!

The cast gives it a halfway decent shot, but the paucity of good comic writing and the dearth of snappy musical accompaniment (although there's a great Jitterbug played under the opening titles) makes it an uphill battle all the way. William Frawley isn't given much of a chance to flesh out his usual comic curmudgeon, and his only opportunity to breath fire is cut short

by Mantan Moreland's closing the show. The sole memorable aspect to James Mitchell is that the role allows Frawley to connive opposite a wife named *Ethel*. Shemp Howard's distinctively homely face isn't seen for much of the film, although his voice is heard now and again, supposedly issuing from within the tin man. Don't let that fool you; self-effacing Ernie Stanton—billed below Howard in the opening cast card but absent from the scroll at the end—was literally taking the heat accumulating inside the metal suit for most of the picture. Eddie's (and Ivan's) best shtick—he's almost telepathically aware of the blondes that he chases—is a virtual steal from Harpo Marx.

Stu Erwin's forte was always his “Aw, Shucks” kind of easy-going delivery. Pretty much a forties and fifties equivalent of Will Rogers, the actor imbued a load of movies (and a couple of TV series) with the gentle humor he displays here. Una Merkel was also something of a clone; her filmic personality was akin to that of ZaSu Pitts, albeit with undeniably wholesome good looks thrown in. Her Sharon in *Cracked Nuts* has more screen time than her Myrtle Sousé in W.C. Fields' 1940 Universal classic, *The Bank Dick*, but the part is neither as showy nor as quirkily memorable.

As Eddie Cline directed both of these pictures, one is forced to come to the conclusion that the longtime comedy specialist was—as were most comedians—only as good as his material. (Stoking the fires of that argument is the fact that one half of *Cracked's* team of authors is W. Scott Darling, the man responsible for at least three of the worst stories Laurel and Hardy set to film in the forties. *The Bank Dick*, on the other hand, was penned by none other than the uniquely talented and totally irreplaceable Uncle Claude, under a *nom de plume*.)

Black actors Mantan Moreland and Hattie Noel are Frawley's married help, Burgess and Chloe, and Mr. Darling and Erna Lazarus must have worked overtime to fit in every demeaning bit of “darkie” nonsense they

could find. Until she gets used to “Mr. Franken-tin,” Chloe is given to shrieking and throwing up her hands; in her big scene, she and a sheet-covered Ivan conspire to scare her husband back onto the straight and narrow path. As Burgess, Moreland bugs his eyes, shoots craps, wields a razor, and intones the immortal “Who dat who say who dat when I say who dat?” The actor does get to pay a couple of low rent *homages*: one to *Frankenstein*, when his leaning over the supine Ivan recalls Dr. Waldman's bending to dissect the conscious Monster; and one to his own performance in *King of the Zombies*, released by Monogram only months before *Cracked Nuts*. The picture's climactic gag has Burgess turning white at the thought of having decapitated the man in the robot suit, and, undoubtedly, somebody found that funny.

It's nearly impossible to flip the pages of Turner's and Price's *Forgotten Horrors* without wading knee-deep in Mischa Auer's early credits, but by 1941, the Russian actor was much more accustomed to the mainstream than to the genre. Having paid his dues as sinister Hindus and misshapen gargoyles during the early thirties, Auer achieved celebrity as the sort of physical comic who fit right into the “screwball” comedies which became all the rage later in the decade. The Mischa Auer of *Cracked Nuts* had shared the screen with William Powell, Marlene Dietrich and Jimmy Stewart, and could look forward to a turn with Orson Welles among the many films he had yet to make. Boris Kabikoff is the most vivid of the comic types seen wrestling with the screenplay here, and this is due far more to Auer's talents than to Eddie Cline's guidance. Unfortunately, the Russian's forceful personality just isn't enough to carry the picture.

Everybody's favorite ghoulish wag—Milton Parsons—blows a line or two while selling Una Merkel on the merits of his rain-making machine, and Lou Costello's whipping boy, Bobby Barber, enlivens a bit

(continued)

Lugosi

His Life in Films, on Stage, and in the Hearts of Horror Lovers

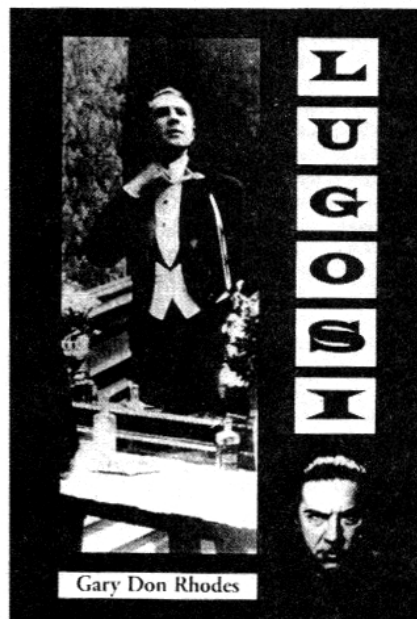
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“Nothing short of amazing...a fabulous piece of cinematic journalism...both scholarly and entertaining”—*Cult Movies*; “exhaustively researched...essential”—*Monsters from the Vault*; “highly recommended!”—*Midnight Marquee*; “an essential purchase”—*Crimson*; “I really can't praise this book highly enough”—*Samhain*; “belongs in any film lover's library”—*Filmfax*.

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in long-shot as a waiter who (literally) runs into Stu Erwin, but that, my friends, is all she wrote. Conceived as a zany science-fiction comedy, *Cracked Nuts* is neither zany nor more than infinitesimally science-fiction; it can't shine the shoes of any of Abbott and Costello's (or Olsen & Johnson's) genre babies. Hardly the "laff riot" the publicists had claimed—it's strictly a three smirk picture—the story of Ivan the Robot is for completists, masochists, and penitents only.

Cracked Nuts—released July, 1941; 61 minutes

CAST: Stu Erwin... Larry Trent; Una Merkel... Sharon; Mischa Auer... Boris Kabikoff; William Frawley... James Mitchell; Shemp Howard... Eddie; Astrid Allwyn... Ethel Mitchell; Ernie Stanton... Ivan the Robot; Mantan Moreland... Burgess; Hattie Noel... Chloe; Francis Pierlot... Mayor Wilfred Smun; Will Wright... Sylvanus Boogie; Elaine Morley... Blonde; Dorothy Darrell... Maid; Pierre Watkin... Warren Benson; Hal K. Dawson... Parade-Shoe Inventor; Tom Hanlon... Radio Announcer; Emmett Vogan... Attorney McAneny; Milton Parsons... Mr. Olson; Marion Martin... Blonde; Pat O'Malley... First Cop; Lyle Clement... Second Cop; Dave Willock... Radio Technician; Marina Sais... Woman on Street; Bobby Barber... Italian Waiter

CREDITS: Associate Producer—Joseph G. Sanford; Director—Eddie Cline; Screenplay—Erna Lazarus and W. Scott Darling; Director of Photography—Art Director—Jack Otterson; Associate Art Director—Harold H. MacArthur; Film Editor—Milton Carruth; Musical Director—Hans J. Salter; Sound Supervisor—Bernard B. Brown; Technician—Jess Moulin; Set Decorations—Russell A. Gausman; Gowns—Vera West

Reviewed by John Soister

The Terror

(1963, 79 min. Directed and Produced by Roger Corman. Associate Producer: Francis Coppola. Script: Leo Gordon and Jack Hill. Music: Ronald Stein. Cast: Boris Karloff, Jack Nicholson, Sandra Knight, Richard Miller, Dorothy Neumann, Jonathan Haze.)

This somewhat disjointed film, reportedly shot in three days, stars Boris Karloff as a Baron in a decrepit old castle tended by a lone servant (Jonathan Haze). His existence is suddenly disrupted by a French army officer played by Jack Nicholson (one of his first big roles) searching for a mysterious woman he encountered near the castle. She turns out to be the restless spirit of the wife Karloff murdered twenty years before, which Karloff agonizingly confesses to. Further complications develop from there, mostly involving wanderings in the family crypt which is eventually destroyed in a fairly impressive scene.

A witch who possesses power over both the woman spirit and a wandering vulture also figures in the plot, along with a local vagabond and a mysterious man named Eric, who provides an important plot twist late in the film that partially straightens out a somewhat muddled story line.

Karloff does his best with the material he's given, giving his all to lines like "Twenty years ago I was not the same man you see before you now." Nicholson shows his inexperience with starring roles, but manages to pull off a few scenes. You can literally see him learning as he goes along. And Jonathan Haze turns in his usual fine performance as Karloff's servant. The rest of the cast is competent.

The Eastman color print appears to have faded slightly in some spots, but the sets and expansive outdoor photography still make this look like a much more expensive film than it actually is.

There are a few tame-by-today's standard gore effects that were undoubtedly more impressive in 1963, and one final gruesome shock effect for the wrap up.

The film has the look of a patch job at times, with a few unexpected shifts in lighting and scenes that don't quite match, but a suitably eerie mood is sustained throughout. It's worth a look, especially if you're a



El Castillo De Los Monstruos (Castle of the Monsters).

Karloff fan. Available from Hal Roach Studios, Film Classics, Inc.

Reviewed by Rudy Minger

Castle of the Monsters (Castillo de los Monstruos, 1957)

Those of you who grew up with such genre publications as Paul Blaisdell and Bob Burns' *Fantastic Monsters of the Films* will recall numerous photo layouts on '50s and '60s Mexican horror cinema. Because these productions drew their inspiration from American horror films, the articles were as fascinating as they were frustrating (Mexican films were, by and large, inaccessible to most U.S. moviegoers of the era).

Particularly intriguing were photos from *Castle of the Monsters*, a horror parody that relied heavily upon south-of-the-border recreations of classic Universal movie monsters. When it finally surfaced on video years later, the letdown was inevitable: it's a curio in the strictest sense of the word, and a limited-interest item at best.

Castle of the Monsters stars comedian Antonio Espino Clavillazo, who, based on a couple of other films of his I've seen, possessed no distinctive comic personality beyond his outlandish wardrobe. Garbed in baggy pants, an oversized coat, a loud necktie, and a floppy hat with the brim upturned, Clavillazo had the appearance of an American burlesque comedian.

In the film, Clavillazo plays a good-natured simpleton employed at a funeral parlor where corpses are being stolen. He befriends a pretty young woman (Evangeline Elizondo) who is later hypnotized by a mad doctor (Carlos Orellana) and brought to his

forboding castle in the countryside. To solve her disappearance, Clavillazo casts a suspicious eye toward a mysterious hunchback (even Mexican mad doctors have hunchbacked assistants!) and follows him to the castle. There our hero encounters South American versions of Count Dracula, the Frankenstein Monster, the Wolf Man, the Mummy, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon. In the ensuing chaos (I hesitate to use the word HILARITY), Clavillazo saves his lady love and foils the fiendish experiments of the crazed medico.

Castle of the Monsters is strictly kiddie fare, much like a lesser Bowery Boys comedy, minus the endearing Leo Gorcey—Huntz Hall partnership. The slow pacing doesn't help; nearly an hour elapses before Clavillazo reaches the castle and meets the monster squad. During the interim, we're "treated" to various comic interludes, including the time-honored "record act," in which Clavillazo tries to pass off a radio singer's voice as his own, only to have the channel switched to a song by a female vocalist. This lip-sync routine was performed to much better effect by comedians like Jerry Lewis and Danny Kaye.

The monsters here are a pretty shoddy bunch. As designed by Antonio Neira Castillo, they look like something you'd find at an amusement park spook house. German Robles, star of the Mexican horror films *The Vampire* (*El Vampiro*, 1957) and *The Vampire's Coffin* (*El Ataúd del Vampiro*, 1957), is seen as the Dracula figure, yet no real attempt was made to draw upon specific character traits; he and all the other monsters behave in the same growling, threatening manner. But what the heck—if the main star doesn't have a personality, why should the supporting cast?

The climactic scenes are repetitive: the monsters pursue a panic-stricken Clavillazo around the castle,

and that's about it. Genre fans will be amazed to see the Creature from the Black Lagoon sprinting around (on dry land!) as quickly as the Wolf Man.

Though many observers would tag this film as the Mexican version of *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein*, I don't completely agree with the comparison. There are similarities, but the true Mexican remake is *Frankenstein, el Vampiro y Cia* (1961), starring Manuel "Loco" Valdes and Jose Jasso.

Reviewed by Ted Okuda

Masseuse

The best way to watch *Masseuse* is first pop the popcorn, spike the coke with Jack Daniels, turn down the lights and turn me on ... I mean turn turn the VCR on! *Masseuse* (Triboro Entertainment) is one of Fred Olen Ray's steamiest movies with liberal sprinklings of soft porn love scenes, beautiful women and several well placed butt shots (both female and male).

The plot is basic. First you throw in a male chauvenist pig to hate (ably played by Tim Abell). This guy's idea of foreplay with his wife is to read a copy of *The Wall Street Journal*. That's no way to treat Griffin Drew! (She is naturally pretty and has a naive quality that wins audience sympathy.) But when it comes to extramarital affairs, he pays a lot of attention to the bevy of sexy actresses. He gets more bunny fluff than Hugh Hefner.

Sex isn't the only way he's cheating. He steals from his wife. He's just a plain bad guy, out to take her last penny. *Masseuse* has a *First Wives Club* flavor. The best part is the way he gets what's coming to him in the end. His weak spot is money and that's where his wife has her revenge. The poor, abused wife also gets even in the sex department with the hunky pool boy!

Notable performance include Monique Parent as the friend and Amy Rochelle as the beleaguered house-

keeper. Brinke Stevens is the attractive hotel manager who is all business. Sherri Graham plays the perfect Vegas hooker with backup from tough guy Peter Spellos, a regular in Fred's films. The late Hoke Howell turns in a polished character part.

The climax of *Masseuse* takes place at a party where the wife is recouping her losses by turning her home into a brothel. Three of Fred's pals are taken upstairs by fashionable prostitutes: the publisher of *Cult Movies*, Buddy Barnett; the man who wrote *Hollywood Chainsaw Hookers*, T. L. Lankford; and my friend, science fiction writer Brad Linaweaver. Brad gets his hands on Brittany Rollins in a scene that struck me as some kind of homage to *Dumb and Dumber*! All of this takes place in the house where Orson Welles died so I kept expecting his ghost to do a cameo.

Masseuse is classic Fred Olen Ray, the kind of movie he was known for before his new cycle of family oriented films. It plays on late night cable a lot. The women are hot, the sex is nasty and the revenge is sweet. What more can anyone ask? I highly recommend it.

Reviewed by Leslie Culton
(Leslie Culton is a long time B movie fan and a budding Scream Queen.)

Rock 'N' Roll Psychedelic Trip Party

(Available from Moonlight Cinema). From out of the hacked-up detritus of modern cool comes this long, masterful swatch of video wallpaper. Creator Larry Jones calls this "a mind-blowing multimedia collage of images from the American pop-underground." What it is, is a surreal meditation on art, drugs, pleasure, sex, social disintegration, death and the coming Apocalypse. The salient difference between this tape and a Chick Bible tract is that Jack Chick wants every slobbering one of us (except Catholics) in cartoon-

Fundamentalist Heaven and Jones enjoys the ride to kinescope-Hell.

I've seen this tape on nightclub TV screens for a few years and witnessed also the slack amazement and hooting laughter it wrings from the cover-charged masses. Now you, gentle reader, whatever your age or condition, may own this weird artifact. You will find sin, punishment, moral rot, Liberace, exploding tampons, Cubism, strippers, bikers, naked biker mamas, Jim and Tammy, Nazis, Communists, hideous oppression, used car-salesmen, and a riotously funny re-edit of Ron and Nancy declaring war on drugs. Crackhead rats, fucking buffalo, and enough wrecked machinery to bring off J.G. Ballard. Devils masturbate and bananas get blow-jobs. Perrier bottles heave in orgasm and immortal souls are damned to the coke-pits of Hell. Breasts and skulls heap in ungainly profusion.

William Burroughs, Lenny Bruce, Peter Fonda and Anton LaVey (the remainder-counter Satan) offer odd snatches of libretto. The music comes from the likes of Hawkwind, King Crimson, Jeff Beck, Sly and the Family Stone (that orgy classic, "Sex Machine"), and Frank Zappa. Jones is a silent-movie freak and provides lots of insane footage from his vast archive. Passages are tinted and distorted and the editing is nicely timed to the music's pulse. Black Flag called for a "TV Party" back in '80 and now we finally have it. This tape is D.I.Y. with a stylish vengeance and the sum of Jones' imagery is deft affirmation of the ancient doctrine "Do as thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."

Needless to say, Jones does not try to uplift, has no discernible moral authority, and the doctrine he asserts here would probably horrify tens of thousands of Fox News viewers. Nevertheless, Moonlight Video is an excellent source for many other delightful obscurities and marginalia. They are at 416 West 3rd. St., London, KY 40741.

Reviewed by Ron Garmon

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Poe <input type="checkbox"/> Pets ('73/UK) Topless women in chains & cages <input type="checkbox"/> Pirates of Blood River ('62/UK) Christopher Lee <input type="checkbox"/> The Raincoat Crowd ('79/X) <input type="checkbox"/> Return of the Zombies ('72/Spain) Paul Naschy <input type="checkbox"/> The Rogue ('76/Ital) Barbara Bouchet, Margaret Lee <input type="checkbox"/> The Rue Morgue Massacre ('72/Spain) Paul Naschy <input type="checkbox"/> Salon Kitty ('76/Ital.) Helmut Berger, Ingrid Thulin <input type="checkbox"/> Seven Blows of the Dragon ('73/Chin-Eng dubbed) <input type="checkbox"/> The Sex Machine ('75/Italian) Agostina Selli, "R" <input type="checkbox"/> The Sexorcist ('74/Ital.) Stella Carnachia writes! <input type="checkbox"/> The Sin of Adam and Eve ('72/Mex) Bible nude! <input type="checkbox"/> Slave of the Cannibal God ('78) Ursula Andress <input type="checkbox"/> Slavers ('79) Slave trade epic, Britt Ekland, Ron Ely <input type="checkbox"/> S.S. Hell Camp ('76/Ital) Violence, Nudity, Torture! <input type="checkbox"/> Satchine Motel ('75/Ital) Ursula Andress, Barbara Bach <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Affair ('79/Ital.) Ornella Muti skinnypids <input type="checkbox"/> Syndicate Sadists ('72/Ital.) Umberto Lenzi directs <input type="checkbox"/> Terror ('74/Italian) Nun takes revenge on her rapist <input type="checkbox"/> The Terrorists ('67/UK) Anouka Hempel, Sex spoof <input type="checkbox"/> Tiffany Jones ('74/UK) Anouka Hempel, Sex spoof <input type="checkbox"/> Tis Pity She's A Whore ('73/Ital.) Charlotte Rampling <input type="checkbox"/> Titillation ('82/X) Angelique Pettyjohn, K. 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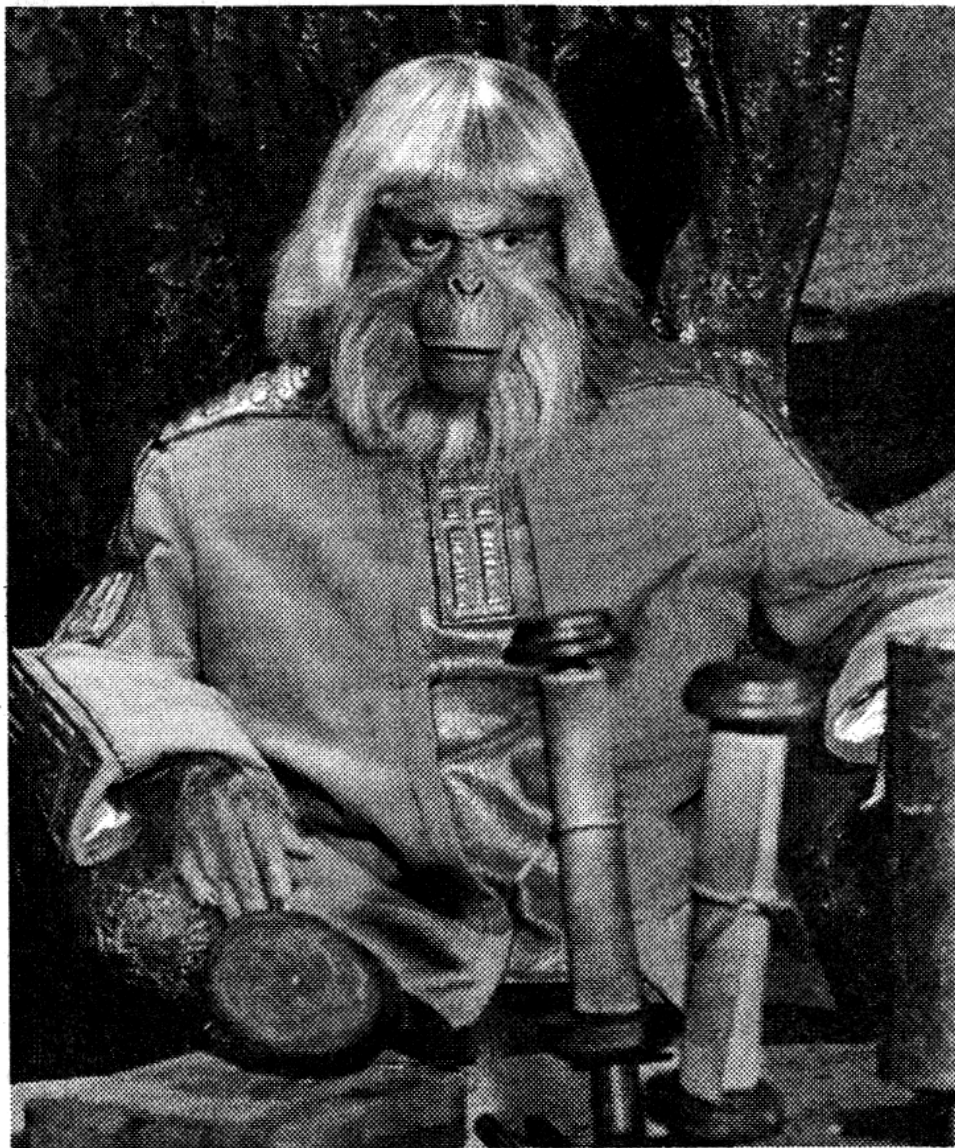
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Booth Colman



Booth Colman as the wily orangutan scientist Dr. Zaius on CBS' short-lived *Planet of the Apes* teleseries (1974).

by Tom Weaver

A veteran of almost half a century in the film and television industry can't help occasionally dabbling in the horror and science-fiction categories, and actor Booth Colman is no exception. Colman co-starred as the malevolent Mories in the future-set *World Without End* (1956), conspiring against 20th century time travelers; on TV, he has guested on dozens of sci-fi and suspense series, from classics like *Thriller* and *The Outer Limits* to more recent genre fare like *Galactica 1980* and *Star Trek: Voyager*. He also played the wily orangutan scientist Dr. Zaius on CBS' short-lived *Planet of the Apes* teleseries (1974).

These credits just scratch the surface of the career of the prolific Colman. Born in Portland, Oregon, and educated at the Universities of Washington and Michigan, he served in the Japanese Language Division of U.S. Military Intelligence during World War II. After his discharge, Colman began acting on the New York stage, rubbing

elbows with many acting legends (Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone among them); in 1951, he headed to Hollywood to make his film debut. Between movie and TV assignments, Colman keeps active with theater work; since 1981 he has played Ebenezer Scrooge (A Christmas Carol's contemptuous cheapskate) more than 500 times on the stage of the Meadow Brook Theatre in Rochester, Michigan.

Booth Colman: I more or less always wanted to be an actor. I acted in plays at school, and after I came out of the Army, I stayed in New York City. I joined the Equity Library Theater, which was just beginning, and did two plays for them [*Maria Stuart* and *No More Ladies*]. I was approached by an agent and got started fairly quickly, understudying and playing two small parts in an Irwin Shaw play, *The Assassin* [Colman's Broadway debut, 1944]. Then I did auditions for various people, among them Margaret Webster, a distinguished theater director in New York. She happened to have been born in New York City, but her parents

were Dame May Whitty and Ben Webster, a theatrical family of 300 years in England. (They were playing in New York when she was born.) Margaret Webster referred Maurice Evans' company to me. They came to see me in the Shaw play, and I met with them and auditioned and so forth. I joined him for *Hamlet*, which played for a number of months; I played Guildenstern and understudied Laertes. Then I was with him on the radio that year, with Helen Hayes, who had her own program. I remember narrating *Romeo and Juliet* when the two of them did that.

Cult Movies: What lured you to Hollywood?

BC: I worked on the Broadway stage and around New York until 1951. In '51, I was with Basil Rathbone in the summer tour of *The Winslow Boy*, and I had a chance to come out here for a test for Howard Hawks. That was my first picture, it was called *The Big Sky* [1952] with Kirk Douglas. That went on for a good many weeks, and then I stayed out here because other jobs presented themselves. I didn't go back to New York until 1955, and then I did a long tour with the Robert Shaw Chorale and Symphony. We went to 125 one-night stands, except for Chicago and Toronto, where we were two nights.

CM: Jump back a bit and talk about *The Winslow Boy* and Basil Rathbone.

BC: It was produced by the Theater Guild. The London company was playing on Broadway, and as soon as they closed, we opened in Westport, Connecticut, at the Theater Guild's summer theater there. We were supposed to play two or three dates of a week apiece, but frankly the company was so good that it got bookings and went on for a number of months. Basil Rathbone had taken over the direction of the play—they had a disagreement with whoever it was who began it. It was a very fine production and he was wonderful in the part. Of the various people who played the part, I think he was probably the best in it.

CM: Did he play the boy's father?

BC: Oh, no, he played the great lawyer. (The boy's father in our company was Colin Keith-Johnston, who had been in the original company of *Journey's End* in London.) Rathbone was easily the best in the [lawyer] part because he had that icy, "fish" quality that it needed [laughs]. We had David Cole, a young English boy who made a hit in *The Innocents*, the Henry James novel, and Meg Mundy, who had been in *The Respectful Prostitute* on Broadway. It was a very good company. I used to—I can't say correspond with Rathbone, but I had several exchanges of letters with him, and as the years went by, I saw him several times, though I never was in a picture with him. I saw him out here. When he came here, he was old and tired and working in some Grand Guignol stage show that they did here, in the Santa Monica High School, I believe. It was awful, a terrible comedown for him. I can only gather that he needed the money. (He had earned a great deal in his day, but it wasn't there when he was old and tired.) It had very little merit and it had very little publicity. Phil Tonge, a great friend of his and mine, and Phil's wife and I went to see the show, and we picked up Basil afterwards and drove him to his hotel. That was the last time I saw him, because he went back to New York. He didn't look very well, and I don't think he was very well.

CM: What kind of a part did he have in it?

BC: I don't remember anything about the show.

He was the lead, whatever that was, but the show itself just...meant nothing. It was awful, it was a Grand Guignol play with the side of someone's face being fried in a pan and all that. It was unfitting to see him doing that stuff. I felt so sorry that he felt he had to.

CM: And as a director, how did you enjoy working with him?

BC: He was fine, a wonderful director. I didn't see him afterwards in New York because I came out here, but I did see him here when he came here to work. That was also true with Boris Karloff. I met him the first time during Hamlet rehearsals, because he was a silent partner of Maurice Evans, he was an investor in the show. And Boris was courting one of the ladies in the company. She wasn't an actress, she was an English lady who handled Evans' business and personal details. Boris and Evie were married when we were on our break-in tour. In our company, playing Osric, was Morton DaCosta, who later became a very important director - *Auntie Mame* [1958] and *The Music Man* [1962] were some of his film credits. I remember he sent Evie a telegram for the wedding: DON'T LET HIM SCARE YOU OUT OF BED. [LAUGHS] I saw the Karloffs for, oh, 20-odd years after that, whenever they came out here. We were very friendly. Eventually he moved back to England, but he'd come here when there was work.

CM: Was Karloff still married to his wife Dorothy when you first met him?

BC: No, I think they were divorced. Dorothy was the mother of his daughter, and I think Dorothy came from Portland, Oregon. I believe her family were bakers. SHE was a schoolteacher. Apart from that, I don't know anything about her. Boris was married several times in his life.

CM: Everybody talks about what a kind, gentle, poetry-reading soul he was - and yet he was married about as many times as Elizabeth Taylor!

BC: I think seven. I never heard him say a word about [his multiple marriages]; it's not something he would have discussed with his young actor-friends [laughs]!

CM: What was Evie Karloff like?

BC: She was a very charming English lady. She'd been married to a comedian named Tom Helmore, and they were divorced. She and Karloff were married for the rest of his life. Several years ago, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences had a retrospective on Boris Karloff, and they invited her and they brought her over from England for the weekend. I was invited to the little cocktail party they have for friends and so forth, before the members and the public come in. Someone invited me because they knew I had been with Karloff in a couple of his undertakings; there were others like me there. When I was introduced to her, I said my name and mentioned Maurice Evans, and that brought back [to her] a memory. She was then in her advanced 80s, a very old party, but she was very cordial and very nice. Also there was Boris' daughter Sara Jane, whom I hadn't seen since she was a little girl. I had a nice conversation with her and met her son, who is an attorney. Sara Jane is a very lovely lady who lives out in the desert. I've been in touch with her a couple of times recently, during the time she was trying to get the Post Office to issue the [Classic Movie Monsters] stamps. She did a lot of work on that, and I managed to get the petitions into the three actors' unions here. Everyone signed them, as I'm



Boris and Evelyn on the set of *Targets*.

sure thousands of people did all over the country. She called me when she heard that the campaign was successful - Karloff appears on two of the stamps, *Frankenstein* and *The Mummy*.

CM: You were also on Karloff's *Thriller* TV series.

BC: Yes, a couple of times. He occasionally played in it - he didn't play in the episodes I worked in, but he was the host. We also worked together in a series at the old Roach studio, *The Veil*, which Karloff later told me he was never paid for! Those pictures are probably still in some vault.

CM: A bunch of them were spliced together into "movies" and shown on TV.

BC: I remember playing a psychotic young man or something like that, but I don't recall the storyline. I think Karloff told me that nine or ten were made, and then they ran out of money or something. I was in a couple of live television shows with him, too, I guess in the '50s. An amusing story: On one, the actors were taking a smoke break and he joined us as we were talking about our agents, complaining about something. He said [in an English accent], "Well, you know, I'm with MCA. MCA has offices all over the world. And when I'm out of work, I'm out of work a-l-l over the world!" [laughs] I've always remembered that!

CM: You had a pretty good part in one of your two *Thrillers*, "Waxworks."

BC: It was a "remake" of *Mystery of the Wax Museum*. I was the homicide inspector and my assistant was Ron Ely. We must have looked like Mutt and Jeff [laughs] - he's about six-four, something like that, a very tall fellow, and I'm five-nine-

and-a-half. I played with him later, down in Mexico, when he was TV's Tarzan.

CM: What was it you liked about Karloff?

BC: Well, just about everything. He was a wonderful friend with a great sense of humor, and he loved his work. He always had great stories to tell, like Lon Chaney giving him a ride home one day when Boris was looking for extra work at Paramount! He had great stories and he relished his success, which came to him fairly late in life - he was past 40 when he got *Frankenstein*. He reveled in it, he enjoyed the success, and he'd worked very hard for it.

CM: Did you ever see him on stage?

BC: Oh, yes, I saw him in *Arsenic and Old Lace* and *The Linden Tree*, which Maurice Evans backed, and *Peter Pan*. I wish I could say I was in one of them - I wasn't, but I did see him in those things, and I would see him afterwards.

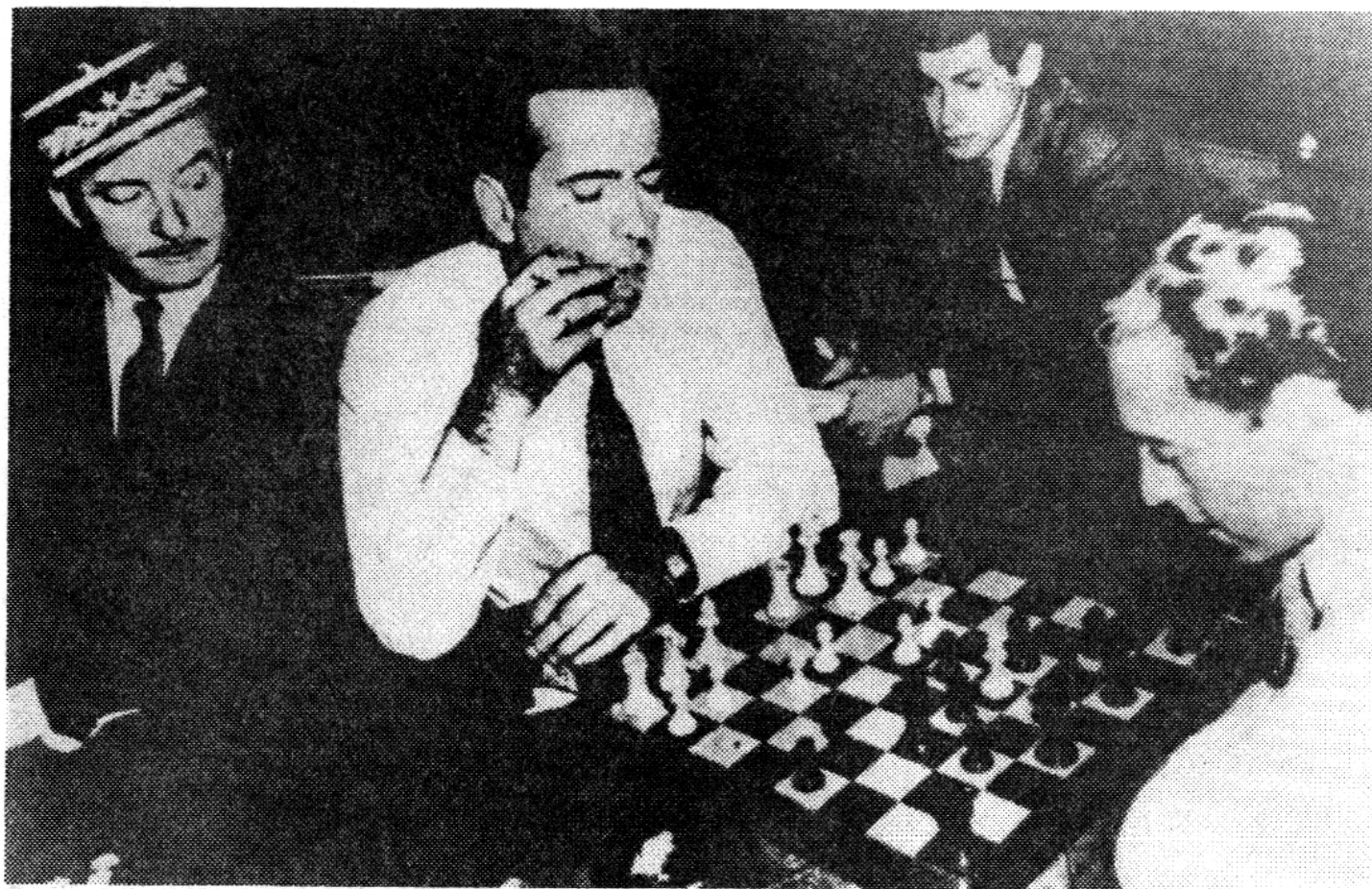
CM: When Karloff was working in Hollywood in the '60s, did they have a home to stay at, or were they put up in hotels?

BC: I think at that time they stayed at the Chateau Marmont, which is a hotel on the Sunset Strip. Whether he owned property here, I don't know; I would doubt it, I think he probably gave all that up when he went to New York and played on the stage so much.

CM: Apart from talking about "the business," what else would Karloff talk about? What were his interests?

BC: He was a great cricketer, and in his halcyon days here he was a member of the British cricket

(continued)



Claude Rains (left) and Booth Colman (rear) are interested spectators of a chess match between Humphrey Bogart and Paul Henreid between takes of *Casablanca*.

set. Sir Aubrey Smith was the head of it, and ALL the British players - there was a tremendous colony here in those days. I've learned since that a certain amount of snobbery existed, the caste system that they brought with them; some members of the British colony here just sort of disassociated themselves from it, like Charles Laughton and others. But Karloff seemed to be comfortable with all of that. He came from a rather distinguished judicial family: I think there were seven boys, of which he was the youngest. They were all connected with the bar in England. But Boris wanted to be an actor and ran off to Canada, and I gather that (until he became a big success) he didn't have too much contact with them. I could be wrong about that, I don't know his family details that well.

CM: Did he ever talk politics?

BC: Not to my knowledge. In fact, I don't think he became an American.

CM: I recently interviewed a guy named Aubrey Schenck, who produced a couple Karloff pictures, and he also sang Karloff's praises. And then, out of the blue, he threw in the comment that Karloff was "the stingiest guy who ever lived."

BC: That was not my experience, although I certainly can't claim to have been out with him a lot. They were fond of me, I feel, but I didn't share any intimacies with them or go out socializing or anything else. I could have been his son in terms of age. But I was never aware of anything of the sort. And on the rare occasions that we had coffee or something, he certainly paid. I remember riding in a taxi cab with Maurice Evans in New York; we were doing *Hamlet* and, between the matinee and the evening, we had the Helen Hayes radio show

to tape. The cab fare was 80 cents, and he said [in an English accent], "Let's see now...here's my 40..." [Laughs] So he was rather like that! Sometimes I wondered, "Now, why would he do that?" It may have been that he was just basically cheap; but also it could have been to make a young actor feel that he was an equal. But if the places were reversed, I would have just paid the bill and forgotten about it! But, you know, these people grew up in a different milieu, under different circumstances, and I suppose there was a day in their lives where sixpence or two and six meant something [laughs]!

CM: You mentioned Lon Chaney before, and I know you have another second-hand Chaney story that involves Joan Crawford.

RC: I worked in an episode of *The Virginian*, and the director of that show was Robert Gist. I'd known him from the New York days - he was in the original company of *Harvey* - and he knew I enjoyed anything about Chaney. So he got her to talk about Chaney one morning, when we were sitting around in a little circle rehearsing lines. She started to talk about Chaney and she got emotional: She said that he was the greatest actor she'd ever been with in her career, including all the MGM leading men and everything else. He had opened up the world to her, taught her to think and to react, not just pose and all that. She still did a lot of posing [laughs] but, however, she had great admiration for him. Her sentiments were obviously true. He must have been amused by her and, although it was a silent picture, he probably taught her not to just react with those big eyes, but to think about what she was supposed to be saying

and doing.

CM: Any memories of playing a small part in *Them!*?

BC: I was a newspaperman in that; it was directed by Gordon Douglas, who had worked years before with Laurel and Hardy. I remember the interview to get the job: I was sitting on a bench in the casting office, next to a tall kid who was also waiting to go in and see Solly Biano, the casting man in those days. We spoke to pass the time, and he said [in a Texas drawl], "I'm from Texas. I come here to be a movie star." He didn't say he was here to be an actor or to look for work, he was coming here to be a movie star. He got into the picture, too. Well, a short time later, Walt Disney sent for a print of *Them!* because he was interested in (Them! star) Jim Arness. He saw the scene that this Texas kid played - he was in a psycho ward because he insisted he had seen these monster ants. He played the scene very well, and Disney said, "Who's that?" They had to find out his name, and Disney said, "I want to talk to him." And this kid got the part of Davy Crockett [in the Disney TV series]. His name was Fess Parker. That was his start, one of those "happy accidents."

CM: Do you recall how you got your part in *World Without End*?

BC: If I'm remembering right, the agent read it and suggested me for it, and I went over and auditioned for it and got the part. I can't remember very much about it: It was a quickie, it was done in eight or ten days I would say. The Australian actor, Rod Taylor, I think it was his first job here. He subsequently went over to MGM. And the director, Edward Bernds, was a very nice man.

I saw the picture recently because someone gave me a tape of it and...it's just a quick job of the day. I'm sure it did very well, I'm sure they made a lot of money on it. The actors didn't!

CM: Of all you movies that I've seen, you had the biggest parts in *World Without End* and *Raiders from Beneath the Sea* [1964].

BC: When I look at those things now, I realize how much I had to learn [about acting in movies]. I had to learn to do less in front of the camera. My training was all on the stage, where you have to project your voice and your actions for the balcony. Of course, in pictures you have to do just the opposite.

I suppose my biggest part was in one of those sort of dumb pictures. Years after *World Without End*, a friend of mine, Nancy Galloway, was Sam Peckinpah's secretary at Warners. They had been great friends - Peckinpah was best man at her wedding. I had a lunch date with her and I came up to get her at his office. She introduced me to him, and he said, "Oh, hello, Booth. You don't remember me, do you? And I didn't. He said, "I was the assistant director on *World Without End*," and I was embarrassed because, after all, I should have known that. But I didn't! He was a very pleasant man, quite unlike his reputation with the booze and the swearing and the carrying-on. And he was very nice to her - she was with him quite a long time.

CM: In the early '60s you made a few films overseas.

BC: I spent one year in Rome, the year we had an actors' strike here. I worked there in two American pictures [*Under Ten Flags*, 1960, and *Romanoff and Juliet*, 1961] and two Italian-Yugoslav co-productions. I also did a lot of dubbing of Italian movies into English. I was quite busy that year! They had a small Anglo-American community there, professional actors or somebody's husband or wife [laughs], and they were pretty good. I dubbed quite a few pictures into the English-language version. They had to dub everything - there was a French company and a German and so forth.

CM: Do you remember the titles of the Italian-Yugoslav movies you mentioned?

BC: No, I've tried to do that before and I can't. I remember going to Dubrovnik and once to Zagreb, and in one scene, about four languages were used. You learned where your cue was and that's when you spoke. Of course, everything was dubbed later, so it didn't matter. They had an Italian speaking Italian, I spoke English, and there was a Serbian and someone else, German, I think. They were lousy horror pictures, but I don't remember much about them.

CM: Were they any other Americans in them?

BC: Not to my knowledge. Unless they were hiding behind accents or something [laughs]!

CM: You worked on a lot of different TV series in the '60s, including *Tarzan* and *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea*.

BC: *Tarzan* was in Mexico, and I think I did two episodes back-to-back. If the show had had a third season, my character would have been repeated. But I understand they had arguments over salary and they didn't continue it, so they had only the two seasons and I was only on the two episodes of the final season.

I remember Irwin Allen [producer of *Voyage*] - he also directed the episode you mentioned. He



"I'm sure they were Maurice Evans' costumes [from the movies], because the studio had everything there. We were more or less the same size. I like to think that I got that job because I did it well, but it may have been because the clothes would fit!"

was a very pleasant man to me. I did a couple of jobs for him later on, like a pilot that didn't sell. He had had a successful show called *The Time Tunnel*, and he sort of revamped it and called it *Time Travelers* - the same idea of a professor sending the two leading men back into the past. I did the part of the professor. It didn't sell, for what reason I don't know; it was as good as any of the other junk made at the time! I would have been a regular on the show if it had taken off.

CM: You were a regular on the short-lived *Planet of the Apes* TV series.

BC: At the time it was being cast on the Fox lot, they saw a great many people. I had an appointment in the ordinary way and I had to read a scene, and they seemed to like the way I did that. I was called back (I think twice), and finally read for the assembled "supreme court." They liked what I did; one of the men said, "Would you feel claustrophobic in that kind of makeup?" Trying to be funny, I said, "Well, I think Lon Chaney's ghost

would come down and protect me," or some idiot remark like that. Which they thought was good! The next thing I heard was that I'd gotten the job, as Dr. Zaius. I certainly enjoyed it, but if you'd said at the time that 27 years later people would still be interested, I would have been amazed!

CM: They told you that you had the job before you were involved in any makeup sessions?

BC: That's right. Then they did a plaster cast of my head, my face and all of that. At the auditions, the thing was, "Could he say the lines? Could he have intensity?" or whatever it was they were looking for. (That's what I would look for, anyway.) So, no, there was no makeup session first - that would have entailed a lot of time and money.

CM: Do you remember who else was up for the part?

BC: No, I don't, but I can tell you that there were a great many.

CM: What was the makeup ordeal like the first
(continued)



Hugh Marlowe and Nancy Gates are menaced by Booth Colman in *World Without End*.

time.

BC: Well, it was horrendous. I've never cared much for spirit gum and sticking things on and all of that - and this was that in spades! But you get used to anything. I was made up every morning by Frank Westmore, the youngest of the first generation of Westmores. When I got used to it, it wasn't so bad.

CM: "Walk" me through a busy day for you on the Apes set.

BC: I had to get up around quarter to four in the morning, to be there at Fox, in Frank's chair in the makeup department, at five o'clock. And I was ready at eight, with about a half an hour or so off in the middle, when they'd bring me in breakfast. At eight o'clock, I'd be on the set, after the wigs and the clothes and all the rest of it. I'm sure they were Maurice Evans' costumes [from the movies], because the studio had everything there. We were more or less the same size. I like to think that I got that job because I did it well, but it may have been because the clothes would fit!

Then we'd do the day's work, whatever it was. They got very good at it as time went on, and I'd be through in the early afternoon. But, when we first started, there were days when I was there all day long. Of course, you get very tired; I don't think I could handle it today. You'd go home tired and study whatever you had to do tomorrow. It wasn't something where you'd be working constantly, morning, noon and night at all; after all, it was a television show.

CM: And lunch?

BC: You couldn't have lunch, except something through a straw. I tried to eat a sandwich one day, but you can't: You had to eat like an animal, with your "other mouth" out in front of you. And you couldn't rinse your mouth or anything. So I gave that up. I'd have breakfast, and then very little at lunch and dinner.

CM: Had you seen any of the Apes movies?

BC: I saw the first one, and maybe one of the others. That's all.

CM: Roddy McDowall said that after a while, because of all the rubber appliances, his face was like hamburger.

BC: Well, yes. And some people are sensitive to acetone and those things, which they use to remove the makeup. I know I had problems, too. After two or three days of it, your face is very irritated. If you have a day or two off, it heals quickly - at least in my case it did. But he had skin problems of some kind. They'd spend about 15 minutes taking the makeup off, because they did it very carefully in order to use it on "Atmosphere People" the next day. They used human hair and yak hair on me, so it was an expensive proposition and they saved the pieces. I'd get new stuff every day.

CM: And, once they were peeled off you, they became "hand-me-downs."

BC: That's right. I don't know if they could do that today; it's probably un-hygienic! Roddy was very pleasant to me and we did our scenes very well. But we were never really formally introduced. One day I was talking to him withOUT my makeup, and suddenly he said, "Oh!" and he started to laugh. I guess my voice was a giveaway and he realized who I was, and I realized that he didn't know what I looked like without my makeup on!

CM: McDowall also said he had to depend on his eyes and facial movements to do any sort of acting through all the makeup.

BC: The eyes are the only thing of your own that are showing. You have to learn to use your voice so it doesn't sound too muffled. You have to "throw your voice," like a ventriloquist. Your body posture and your walk and all of that sort of thing - that's all you can do. After all, you're completely hidden otherwise.

CM: You visited a zoo for pointers on how to

play an orangutan.

BC: Yes, I did, I went to the zoo here and watched them. They walk, you know, in a different way, their structure is different.

CM: The reviews of the first episode were universally awful. *Variety* called it "retarded!"

BC: I thought that was the best one they had! And I still do! I guess the reviewers felt it suffered by comparison with the movie, and perhaps that is so. But it wasn't so bad. I think it was the best script they had.

CM: Were you disappointed when it was canceled after only 14 episodes?

BC: I certainly was. Not because I thought it was a great artistic achievement, but it was a very nice job. I was hoping that it would get two or three seasons, and it MIGHT have, under other circumstances.

CM: For years now, you've been playing Scrooge in a Michigan stage production of *A Christmas Carol*.

BC: I've been going to that theater [the Meadow Brook Theatre at Rochester] since 1971. My friend Terry Kilburn was the artistic director there; he recently retired after 25 years. He directed me in the play *The Andersonville Trial* here in Los Angeles in 1961, and in 1971, when he was at the Meadow Brook Theater and decided to repeat *Andersonville Trial*, he sent for me to come and do the part, which I did. Then I did *Inherit the Wind*, *A Man For All Seasons*, *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*, *Death Of A Salesman*, *The Merchant Of Venice* - a lot of different plays. And finally he decided to do *A Christmas Carol* 16 years ago, and it was a big hit and a moneymaker for them. (Terry was in the 1938 MGM version of *A Christmas Carol*, in which he played Tiny Tim.) I've done it every year since; last year [1997] was the fifteenth time. It's a wonderful part, and it isn't just some silly nonsense about a cranky old man. You see a metamorphosis of the man; it's a morality play, and it has a great deal to say. It's done very well there, I must say, and it's a "big thing." A lot of locals are used, and every year there's competition among the children for the jobs. There's a nucleus of regulars; a couple of people have been with me all 15 years in it. And from time to time I do another play there, *Camping With Henry and Tom*, a play about Thomas Edison and Henry Ford and President Harding. I play Tom Edison.

CM: What else would you like to add, as we wrap this up? Anything?

BC: No, not really [laughs]! I'm here waiting for the next job, waiting for the next phone call. I don't intend to retire, not as long as I can learn the lines and move around. ■





13 Demon Street

13 DEMON STREET • 1960 • b&w • Sweden • in English with Swedish subtitles
thirteen 23 minute episodes hosted by Lon Chaney Jr.

"Number 13 Demon Street. I am condemned to live here. To suffer on this earth forever as a punishment for my crime. It is said that no greater outrage was ever committed by a mortal. But should I find a crime more terrible than mine, my punishment will end." — LON CHANEY JR.

Somewhere between *One Step Beyond* and *Thriller* lies *13 Demon Street*, a thirteen episode television show created and directed by Hollywood horror veteran, CURT SIODMAK, hosted by a disheveled LON CHANEY JR., and shot in Sweden. After directing the pilot for Hammer's unsold *Tales of Frankenstein* ('58), Siodmak made a deal with LEO GUILD and KENNETH HERTS to shoot a supernatural horror anthology, *13 Demon Street*, in Stockholm's Nordisk Tonefilm studio in 1960.

But while the TV version of *13 Demon Street* was never broadcast in the U.S., it was aired in Sweden (with the simple addition of Swedish subtitles). And that's what we've found. Direct from the Land of the Midnight Sun and transferred from 35mm prints, comes this incredibly rare Something Weird exclusive, the original thirteen episodes of *13 Demon Street*. Bool

13 Demon Street. VOLUME 1 THE BLACK HAND

When his car is hit by a speeding driver, Dr. Heinz Schloss, a brilliant surgeon, removes his pinned hand by severing it with a scalpel. Since the driver of the other car, Erich Münster, was killed in the crash, Schloss replaces his missing hand with one of Erich's. Oops! Turns out that Mr. Münster was a psychopathic strangler of five, and before you can say, "The Hands of Orlac," the new hand of Heinz is taking on a homicidal life all its own.

FEVER

During a flu epidemic, Dr. Franz makes a housecall to crazed artist Otto Szegedy, whose dingy flat is covered with paintings of the same beautiful woman. Asked who the model is, Szegedy hisses, "She's mine!" But when the doctor looks out Szegedy's window, he's startled to see the woman from the paintings smiling seductively at him from her house across the courtyard. A house which, apparently, doesn't really exist...

CONDEMNED IN THE CRYSTAL

"It would be awful to learn one's future," says John Radian, a man with a "fear of the future," who's suffering from a recurring nightmare in which he's drawn to a dilapidated building in a fog-shrouded alley and wakes up screaming. On the advice of his shrink, he locates the building while awake and discovers it's occupied by Madame Germaine, a fortune teller who looks into her crystal ball and tells him that he will die at midnight. How? She will be his killer... #6666



13 Demon Street. VOLUME 2 GREEN ARE THE LEAVES

A television crew arrives at Sweden's Stafsholm's Castle in the hopes of broadcasting a murderous ghost who dwells in one of the bedrooms. But when a crew member is found choked to death in the room, TV host Henry Waller and his girlfriend, Denise, foolishly decide to spend the night in the haunted bedroom. Sure enough, they too find themselves being suffocated as the dapper ghost of Erik Kirsten strolls out from an ancient painting...

THE GIRL IN THE GLACIER

A chunk of glacier is struck in a mine shaft with the figure of a nude woman, guessed to be 50,000 years old, frozen in the ice. Bringing the chunk of ice to a museum, Dr. Sven Sjöström immediately falls in love with the woman entombed in it (whom he calls Angelica) and gets upset when Olsen, a rival scientist, suggests melting the ice. Wanting her all to himself, Sven kills Olsen, buys his girlfriend-on-ice a dress and pair of shoes (!), and is shocked when she suddenly opens her eyes...

THE BOOK OF GHOULS

Finding a ritual that guarantees "untold wealth" in an old tomb, Anton Lupesco goes on a bizarre scavenger hunt in which he must bury the beak of a raven in the oldest grave in the cemetery, steal "an omen of death" from antique shopkeeper CURT SIODMAK in a silent cameo, and seek out a man who does evil and kill him. But — surprise! — there's a tiny detail he's overlooked... #6667

13 Demon Street. VOLUME 3 THE PHOTOGRAPH

After hot shot photographer Donald Powell takes a photo of a farmhouse in snowy Maine, a beautiful woman emerges from it. He tries to embrace her but ends up strangling the woman instead. Back in New York, the photo holds a macabre surprise for him: every time he looks at it, he sees the murdered woman coming closer and closer... And watch for director CURT SIODMAK in a cameo ("I came for my dog!") that was cut when this episode was included in *The Devil's Messenger*.

THE VINE OF DEATH

Museum curator Frank Dylan is thrilled to acquire the bulbs of the ancient Mirada "death vine," puts a bulb in his pocket, and rushes home to plant it. Instead, he stumbles in on Wally, his slimy neighbor, putting the moves on his wife. After a struggle ends up in Frank being killed, his body is buried in the hot house and the death vine quickly sprouts. But as Wally soon learns, the vine is "attracted by the heat of a human body" which it wraps around and strangles... As Chaney neatly explains, "I want you to see a man who wanted to plant a flower, instead of which he dug his own grave..."

A GIFT OF MURDER

At an anniversary party, Jim and Betty Duncan receive a Haitian voodoo doll as an anonymous present, complete with instructions on how to kill one's enemies. After using the doll to eliminate two rivals at work, Jim falls in love with a secretary and decides to get rid of his wife. But as he sticks the pin in the doll's face, he doesn't notice that it's been tampered with... #6668



13 Demon Street. VOLUME 4 THE SECRET OF THE TELESCOPE

Paul Kessler buys an antique telescope at an auction. It seems ordinary enough until he looks out the window with it and sees a vision of his dead self. Convinced that his death could only be the result of his alcoholic wife murdering him, he decides to off her first by putting rat poison in her decanter of booze... (The wrap-up shows Chaney inexplicably cackling at the contents of a malignant dollhouse!)

NEVER STEAL A WARLOCK'S WIFE

Milksop banker Hubert Ames can't afford to provide his sultry wife with the wealth, clothing, and jewelry she demands, so he tries to acquire them via witchcraft. She's unimpressed: "You do the incantations and I'll do the dishes." But when he discovers that she's running away with her illicit boyfriend, Hubert reads from *The Science of Necromancy*, takes advice from a witch's cat, and conjures up a road full of flames for the fleeing lovers...

MURDER IN THE MIRROR

Hired by creepy Count Ottocar Potosi to find a specific antique mirror, Antonio Martinelli is horrified when the mirror shows him a vision of the Count suffocating Mario, his wife's lover — a murder that occurred thirty years earlier and created by the victim's "energy engraved on the glass..."

BLACK NEMESIS

Phony medium "Monsieur" Aramit kills Dr. Robert Standish in order to scam his bereaved widow for some quick cash to pay off a gambling debt. All goes well until the doctor unexpectedly materializes when he isn't supposed to... #6669

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The Ghost of Frankenstein

by John Soister



Part of the fun associated with Universal's Frankenstein series, of course, is quibbling over the titles. *Frankenstein*, you know, originally keyed in on the tragic missteps of the tightly wound Colin Clive. When the grotesque creature quickly proved to be enormously popular with the masses, he did more than steal his creator's thunder; he filched his name as well; "Frankenstein's Monster" became "Frankenstein" a lot sooner than it took the studio to acknowledge the theft via Basil Rathbone some years later. *Bride* blew the competition away in 1935, and the growing coterie of Karloff fans didn't need Ernest Thesiger's solemn pronouncement to know to whom the title referred; the consensus was that Colin Clive's other half was an also-ran. 1939's *Son of Frankenstein* was more forthright; only by logical extrusions bordering on the fantastic could you posit anyone other than Basil Rathbone as the titular star. (Not that the studio didn't try; screenwriter Willis Cooper had old Ygor insinuate that—albeit the "lightning" had

been its mother—Henry Frankenstein had somehow been the Monster's *father*. You can see where that was leading.)

With this, the first '40s execution of a radically '30s concept, the ambiguity returned. One could opt for the ethereal Sir Cedric Hardwicke (transparent of figure and naked of scalp) as he delivered a load of clams to the corporeal Sir Cedric Hardwicke (weighted down with hair appliances); or, one might go the low road and claim that Chaney's initial appearance—covered with "dried sulfur" and as white as any flour-dredged apparition in a Mantan Moreland comedy—gave him dibs on the meaning behind the title. Discussions like this are always fun, even if they seldom matter; as neat a shot as the erstwhile House That Carl Built took in 1942, it was the very Frankenstein franchise that was a shade of its former self.

James Whale had bailed out after the first sequel. He hadn't wanted to do even *that* one, and had contrived to have the Monster blown to atoms

to save himself (and others) the trouble of yet another follow-up. Karloff had jumped ship after the second sequel. In his opinion, the Monster was rapidly becoming a stooge, a henchman; although only three films—quality outings, all—had been made, the gentle Briton found that the integrity of the original concept had been sacrificed to the great god Mammon. Karloff was enough of a realist to understand that the undying Monster's immortality was due to profitability, rather than to electricity, but enough of an idealist to quit while he—and his dear old Monster—were ahead of the game.

For a while, the actor went AWOL from the industry itself. While the boys in Universal's publicity department were brewing enough of a tempest in a teapot about *The Secret of Frankenstein* to provide regular pap for the dailies, *The Great White Way* had welcomed Boris Karloff and all his bogeyman baggage into its heart; *Arsenic and Old Lace* proved to be everything for the '40s vintage Karloff that *Frankenstein* had been for his younger self. The actor found that his own reputation had preceded him, and that he could bring the house down night after night by chalking up his latest murder to the victim's unfortunate choice of words: "He said that I looked like Boris Karloff!" For the nonce, the word was that the actor was able to guy himself, and was not at all upset about publicity pieces highlighting that make-up, those asphalt-spreaders' boots, and the supposed unseen steel "spine."

Back at the studio, of course, the horseshit was flying fast and furious. A glance at the blarney that Universal's publicity mill cranked out for *The Ghost of Frankenstein* makes one doubt—if not outright disbelieve—*anything* he/she has ever heard about *any* of these films. With the baloney stretching from news of the "search" (*Zounds! Deja vu*, all over again!) for a successor to Karloff, to the nonsensical revelation of a "studio policy" which dictated that certain actors would always be seen in Frankenstein movies, to an array of prefab and ludicrously headlined pressbook articles as "Lon Chaney Appears as Monster in Horror Film" (as opposed to his appearing as a monster in a comedy of manners or a Civil War drama), one comes to the conclusion that Universal not only thought ten or so to be the age of the average horror moviegoer, but that ten might be on the high side of that movie fan's IQ.

There's probably more truth to this than any of us would care to admit. Hey, how old were most of us when we fell under the spell cast by *Frankenstein*, or *Dracula*, or *The Mummy*, or any of the old horror movies we embraced so passionately? In the '30s, these films were pitched at grownups; they offered offbeat takes on adult themes—life after death, medical ethics, forbidden love, yadda yadda yadda—and served them up in the company of grotesques perfectly capable of scaring the drawers off the patrons. Come the '40s, and half the population was either overseas, fighting the war, or on the home front, outfitting the war. No one needed to have "adult" themes shoved down his throat, even if they were couched in greasepaint and putty; wartime anxiety, death, and deprivation provided enough unwelcome fodder without any help from Hollywood. Moviegoers were looking for escapism, and the grownups and the kids took a breather from Hitler and Hirohito in the company of Kharis and Frankenstein.

And *The Ghost of Frankenstein* didn't just fill the bill back in April of '42, it was—critics be damned—a hit. Wartime ticket-buyers were a different breed than the seat-warming populace of the earlier decade. The dreary stasis of the Depression had given way to the thrill of W.W.II, and when life took a faster and more unpredictable path, that ever-present mirror of life—the cinema—did likewise. The formula for most “B” movies (please, let's not get unrealistic about *Ghost*) seemed to be that mood was fine and plot important, but pacing was everything. Especially in instances such as this—where most regulars knew the story backwards, forwards, and inside out—the picture could forego footage usually devoted to exposition and cut right to the chase. (Would that the *Son of Dracula* crowd had shared a beer with *The Ghost of Frankenstein* crew.)

Most fans regard this picture as “the last solo appearance of the Monster.” Hell, I maintain that the giant figure was *never* able to get by without his support system of mad scientists, demented assistants, and the like. The box office receipts in 1931 had assured that Henry Frankenstein's problem would become much too profitable for him to deal with only once and far too risky for him to handle alone. Still, as the Monster returned for each successive misadventure, he came encumbered with extra weight that may have added dimension to the saga, but also robbed it of its purity.

Ghost was hardly a solo venture; since *Son*, the Monster had been stomping about under the influence of an evil genius—Ygor. Ironically, Karloff's multi-dimensional creature (in *Son*)—who was adept enough to tell right from wrong and who found himself unable to destroy the child who had befriended him—obeyed Ygor blindly. Chaney's one-dimensional creature (in *Ghost*)—whose capacity for *recognition* was the most hu-

man of his virtues and in whose value system loyalty and friendship played no great part—ignored, betrayed, and finally killed his old comrade. With Lon under the make-up, no spark that might temper the supercharged Monster could be seen. None of the sensitivity of his predecessor

survived the transition. There was nothing of “child-likeness” left, nor did any sense of innocence or misunderstanding permeate the later interpretation as it had the original. Karloff, by far the more cerebral of the two actors, gave us presence; Chaney, by far the more physical of the two actors, gave us volume.

Universal Horrors does a grand job of summing up the early aberrations of the script which the *Magic Image FilmBook* volume includes *in toto*, so there's little point in going into all that. Yet for all the effort at innovation—its new Monster, the new Frankensteins, and (save for Michael Mark, Lionel Belmore, and Lawrence Grant) the new villagers—*Ghost* is mired in a lot of the same old same old.

Take the “fly in the ointment” wrinkle: from its inception, the Frankenstein success story included an element of surprise, both logical and unpredictable, which had led to a monumental cocking up of the initial game plan. In 1931, the fly had been Fritz's sneaky-ass substitution of the abnormal brain for the good one; this (we were told) led to the Monster's propensity to lash out violently whenever he was being whipped or seared with a torch(!) *Bride's* fly was the woman; if the rallying cry of most men is “You can't live with 'em, and you can't live without 'em,” just who did the Monster think *he* was? More importantly, why would Henry Frankenstein imagine even for a moment that an old queen like Pretorious could concoct a female who would soothe the Monster's troubled breast? In *Son of Frankenstein*, Wolf falls victim to Ygor's mind-games and the loopy grandeur of his surroundings; the resultant misguided drive to restore his father's good name leads to his firing up the furnaces once again. (By comparison, the incredible 180 Frank Mannering pulls in 1943's

(continued)





Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man is a total misfire. Even though his veins are free of Frankenstein blood, and he's strengthened by the resolve of the curvy Elsa [who's standing close by his side], Mannering opts for the dark side only because if *someone* doesn't do *something* fast, the alarm will ring and the audience will have to go home.)

Here, we've got more wrinkles than Ayesha after that second fire. The Monster's all for the operation, but wants the brain of little Cloestine (where do they *get* these names?) to sleep over forever. Ygor, that sly devil, inveigles on having his own noodle plopped in the square skull, as he can see where this would ease his way into prestige, power, and some real money. Dr. Bohmer, who doesn't seem to do much at first except hang around in his smock and swallow Ludwig Frankenstein's thoughtless and insensitive comments, is lulled as much by a desire to marry his fist to Lugwig's stiff upper lip as he is by Ygor's silver tongue. With all this slumgullion boiling on the fire, you know that the chances of Dr. Kettering's brain making it into the Monster's rigging start at zero and go down from there.

Other leftovers from earlier installments include Bela Lugosi's marvelous Ygor and the Monster's black suit. This latter item—the absence of which (in *Son*) had sent Boris Karloff into rounds

of kvetching (about “furs and muck”) that were not at all like him—was accepted with not so much as the blink of an eye upon its reappearance. Karloff had been right; the Monster's Sunday best was part of the larger picture, as closely interwoven in the Frankenstein mythos as the Wolf Man's work suit and Dracula's ever-crisp evening clothes were essential to their respective personas. The restoration of the basic black ensemble and its

reappearance throughout the rest of the Universal canon only made the fuzzy sweatshirt in *Son* seem more out of place than it had originally.

Bela's Ygor is a sight for sore eyes. Happily as resistant to small-arms fire as had been Eduardo Cianelli's nameless high priest in the Kharis series, Ygor is hale, hearty, and—if a good scrubbing and the periodontal work is any indication—in *better* shape than he had been in the earlier feature.



Along with his appearance, Ygor's goals have changed; ridding the village of old nuisances is no longer a pastime worthy of his attention. The crafty old shepherd's master plan now encompasses taking over the entire country! While this might be biting off more than any one man (or Monster) can chew, Ygor's yodeling away that he now possesses the strength of "a hundred men" is a picture of megalomania unrivaled since Boris Karloff's less exuberant but equally daft eruptions in *The Mask of Fu Manchu*.

(And you have to wonder if, indeed, the Monster *did* grow stronger with each successive picture. In the first episode, Henry and Doctor Waldman [along with a hypodermic needle and a bludgeon] managed to wrestle him to the floor. *Bride* witnessed his being tied down and carried off by a mere half dozen of so yokels, and in *Son*, a bit of momentum behind a well-placed kick was all it took to topple the Monster from his pins. This sudden blossoming of power in the Monster's mighty arms may exist only in Ygor's feverish [and transplanted] mind; the only *other* times we ever hear of such outlandish claims are in those excised scenes between Ygor-cum-Monster and Larry Talbot in *Ghost's* own son, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*.)

Ghost marks the first time since *Frankenstein* that brains are bandied about like wholesale commodities, but the idea here seems particularly apt. You could watch any of Karloff's three performances and see his Monster turning over thoughts in his mind. Even in *Son* (where Ygor does most of the mental heavy lifting for the pair), his acceding to his partner's decisions is *visible*. With the Monster at hand bearing frozen and inscrutable features, though, there is no indication whatsoever as to whether the lights are on upstairs and if, indeed, anyone is home. A new brain is clearly called for, but the plethora of available raw material not only skirts the edge of risibility, but foreshadows the "monsterally" sequels—*House of Frankenstein* and *House of Dracula*—wherein frenetic brain swapping would prove a plague on both houses and the straw that snapped the franchise's back.

So long as you don't require any humanity amid the horrors and can get past that perpetual squint and scowl, Chaney is not bad as the Monster. His attachment to Cloestine is obviously meant to reflect the Karloffian position where children

were concerned, but no more perfect image of the depths to which this concept had plunged can be had than the still wherein a stiff-limbed Eddie Parker (doubling for Chaney), clutching a wooden stand-in for Janet Ann Gallow, has just sent a buttocks-grasping stuntman to his out-of-frame mats. The childlike confusion that had resulted in little Maria's accidental drowning in the series' primogenitor has given way to slick contrivance. And again, as Chaney's Monster knows nothing of fidelity and is capable of turning on anyone (including his old goombah, Ygor) who stands in his way, no assurance is given that the brute might not drop kick the little girl 100 yards or so if someone *else* becomes the apple of his eye. After all, Doctor Kettering is killed without so much as a second thought (although the action *does* free up a brain for future use); killing is what monsters do best, and Chaney's giant is—first, last, and always—a monster.

The rest of the dramatis personae are fine; they almost always are in the *Frankenstein* series. Cedric Hardwicke's cool and imperturbable Ludwig is an interesting sibling to Basil Rathbone's near hysterical Wolf; blending the personalities of the two men would probably produce a hybrid very much like Colin Clive. Ralph Bellamy does better by Erik Ernst than he did by Captain Montford in *The Wolf Man*, but this may be due to the script's providing him with a more well-delineated part; the screenplay also gives the delectable Evelyn Ankers to him this time around. Lionel Atwill is as enjoyable in his quieter moments (as when he's glaring daggers while Ludwig runs off at the mouth at Bohmer's expense) as he is in his premature snarl of triumph in the last reel.

Having all but snatched *Son of Frankenstein* away from Boris and Basil a couple of years earlier, Bela's copping the honors in *Ghost* must have been a walk in the park for him. With Chaney an unpredictable automaton, Bela grabs the reins and runs the show, not realizing—until, of course, it's way too late—that albeit the Monster can recognize Ludwig Frankenstein (whom he has never met), he will fail to consider Ygor's place in his heart while crushing the shepherd remorselessly behind the laboratory door. More so than in *Son*, Lugosi has to shift gears constantly; here, he goes from being master of the situation to victim of his erstwhile buddy's petulance to back (although briefly) to being on top of the world. He's in command every step of the way, and had Chaney happened to glance sideways even once through those slits he used for eyes, he'd have learned more in a moment from Lugosi than he'd cadged from Erle C. Kenton in the entire 25 day shoot.

Not up to the snuff introduced back in the '30s, *The Ghost of Frankenstein* was just fine, thank you, for the tastes of the next decade. Hans J. Salter's pulsating score keyed the film's more ominous moments, and both Woody Bredell and Milton Krasner performed the kind of visual magic in which Universal's cinematographers usually excelled. (If the puffs in their respective pressbooks are to be taken at face value, the 1931 *Frankenstein* Monster stood seven feet tall, while Chaney's incarnation was merely six foot, nine. It's hard to imagine this tiny discrepancy explaining why James Whale would have Arthur Edeson's camera confront the Monster head on, while director Erle C. Kenton had Krasner and Bredell constantly aim their lenses *up* at the shorter of the giants. George

Robinson, later given the task of making Bela Lugosi's Monster look as awe-inspiring as stuntman Eddie Parker's [or even Gil Perkins'] in *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*, had to contend with changes in perspective in almost every scene.)

A fast paced, atmospheric romp through familiar countryside, *The Ghost of Frankenstein* deserves more respect than it has received to date. Although the Monster has basically become a callow bully, the interplay between him and the Machiavellian Ygor remains well worth watching. No offense is intended in calling it an excellent journeyman effort (the lack of a master's touch is obvious and deplorable), and happily, the picture moves at a clip which this generation—even replete with its eight-minute attention span—can still appreciate.

The Ghost of Frankenstein—released 13 March, 1942; 67 minutes

CAST: Sir Cedric Hardwicke... Dr. Ludwig Frankenstein; Lon Chaney, Jr... the Monster; Ralph Bellamy... Erik Ernst; Lionel Atwill... Dr. Bohmer; Bela Lugosi... Ygor; Evelyn Ankers... Elsa Frankenstein; Janet Ann Gallow... Cloestine; Barton Yarborough... Dr. Kettering; Olaf Hytten... Hussman; Doris Lloyd... Martha; Leyland Hodgson... Chief Constable; Holmes Herbert... Magistrate; Lawrence Grant... Mayor; Brandon Hurst... Hans; Otto Hoffman, Dwight Frye... Villagers; Julius Tannen... Sektal; Lionel Belmore, Michael Mark... Councilors; Harry Cording... Frone; Ernie Stanton, George Eldredge... Constables; with Richard Alexander, Teddy Infuhr, Eddie Parker

CREDITS: Producer—George Waggner; Director—Erle C. Kenton; Original Story—Eric Taylor; Screenplay—W. Scott Darling; Directors of Photography—Elwood Bredell, Milton Krasner; Art Director—Jack Otterson; Associate Art Director—Harold H. MacArthur; Film Editor—Ted Kent; Musical Director—Hans J. Salter; Set Decorator—Russell A. Gausman; Sound Director—Bernard B. Brown; Technician—Charles Carroll; Make-up—Jack P. Pierce; Assistant Director—Charles S. Gould; Gowns—Vera West ■



Bram Who?

By Gordon R. Guy

The novel *Dracula* was written in 1897 by Bram Stoker. Therefore, 1997 commemorated its one hundredth anniversary and, world-wide, followers of the undead nobleman from Transylvania celebrated the book and its author. Many who had never read it did so and were largely disappointed.

For, as highly as the original novel has been deified, and lauded as the progenitor of its kind, a closer look will reveal that this all-inclusive reputation is not deserved. "*Dracula*" is not a very good novel, and I suspect that even in its time it was not all that well received, nor nearly as effective as contemporary critics would have us believe.

The first line of the preface to the book states: "How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them." But this is very much not the case, as the story is then presented via excerpts from Jonathan Harker's Journal, Mina Murray's Journal, Lucy Westenra's Diary, Letters written by Lucy and Mina, and finally a Phonograph Diary spoken by Van Helsing. It is exactly this literary device that most damages the novel's overall effectiveness. Stoker, in attempting to write from so many perspectives, through the voices of so diversified a number of people, largely fails in maintaining any real continuity. Progress through the story is choppy, disconnected, and sometimes confusing.

It is no surprise, nor is it an oversight in the history of literature, that Stoker had no further successful novels, although he wrote a total of seventeen books.

Stoker was not the first to bring a vampire to the pages of fiction. That distinction belongs to Lord Byron's physician, Dr. John Polidori, whose short story "*The Vampyre*" was published in April of 1819, seventy-eight years before Stoker's novel. Nor is Stoker's concept of the vampire his own, because Polidori's vampire was also a nobleman, the entitled Lord Ruthven. The doctor's short story was well received enough that he enlarged upon it and in February of 1820 published "*Lord Ruthven oules Vampires*," which was actually the very first vampire novel.

Lord Ruthven's success continued as several dramatizations were brought to the stage, one of which was attended by a young Alexandre Dumas (who later was to give the world such classics as *The Man In The Iron Mask*, "*The Count of Monte Cristo*" and many other great pieces of literature.) Dumas eventually rewrote one of the Ruthven plays and presented it in 1851, and also subsequently used a vampire aristocrat in a short story called "*The Pale-Faced Lady*." Here again, another familiar element of Stoker's later novel is pre-dated when Dumas changes the locale of his story to the Carpathian Mountains.

The vampire's limited history to this point loses more originality in 1897's serialized novel, "*Varney the Vampire*," mostly based on Polidori's work, and the changes made by this writer would also be used by Stoker fifty years later.

The basic premise of Stoker's novel was not new. By the time of its publication it was a very popular Victorian formula. Indeed, the concept of



the vampire, itself, was already universal, for there is virtually no culture on the globe that does not have its folklore of the returning dead.

The folklore, however, depicts an entirely different and ugly creature. The vampire of folklore is a dead thing, even though once human; it is a foul emanation that crawls out of its grave, with fetid breath, rotting flesh, stained cerements. And if that's not enough, this walking, corporeal cemetery citizen wants to get close enough to you to tear open your throat and lap up your life's blood!

Our popular idea of the vampire bears little resemblance to the features of his folklore family. Stoker and his predecessors did provide a more civilized veneer. They stripped the monster of its unclean, unsavory attributes and made the creature more palatable to modern senses, undead, immortal, but very much still human in appearance. Not only capable of walking among men undetected, but able to pass for human in polite society, in the most genteel, Victorian haunts of the upper class.

It will not be denied that it is Stoker's combined elements of a dark and mysterious nobleman from a far away principality that opened ajar the coffin from which the Romanian Count would soon emerge. But his physical description still left much to be desired. From Harker's observation of his host we have the following: "His face was strong - a very strong - aquiline, with high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily around the temples but profusely elsewhere. His eyebrows were very massive, almost meeting over the nose, and with bushy hair that seemed to curl in its own profusion. The mouth, so far as I could see it under the heavy mustache, was fixed and rather cruel looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips, whose remarkable ruddiness showed astonishing vitality in a man of his years. For the rest, his ears were pale, and the tops extremely pointed; his chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin." Later in the novel Mina Harker gives the following cursory impression: "...a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black mustache and pointed beard." Hardly the debonair denizen of darkness as we have come to know him.

The first filming of the novel came in 1918 from the German, F. W. Murnau. Unable to secure copyright clearance from Stoker's widow, Murnau called the film *Nosferatu*, the Slavic term for vampire. But Murnau's Count much more resembled the revenants of folklore, as an ugly, hoary, rat-featured physiognomy played by Max Schreck.

Hamilton Deane was the next macabre midwife to encounter the Count. The son of one of Stoker's friends, Deane was an actor and the head of his own repertory company. He adapted Stoker's novel into play form and premiered it in June of 1924. It ran for three years in the provinces and was brought to London in February of 1927. During this time the role of Dracula was assayed first by Edmund Blake and then by Raymond Huntley, both of whom are little remembered today.

When the play was brought to America they began casting about for someone else to play Dracula. In an article re-printed in *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine, No. 35, Bela Lugosi explained: "There was no male vampire type in existence. Someone suggested an actor of the Continental School who could play any type, and

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mentioned me. It was a complete change from the usual romantic characters I was playing, but it was a success."

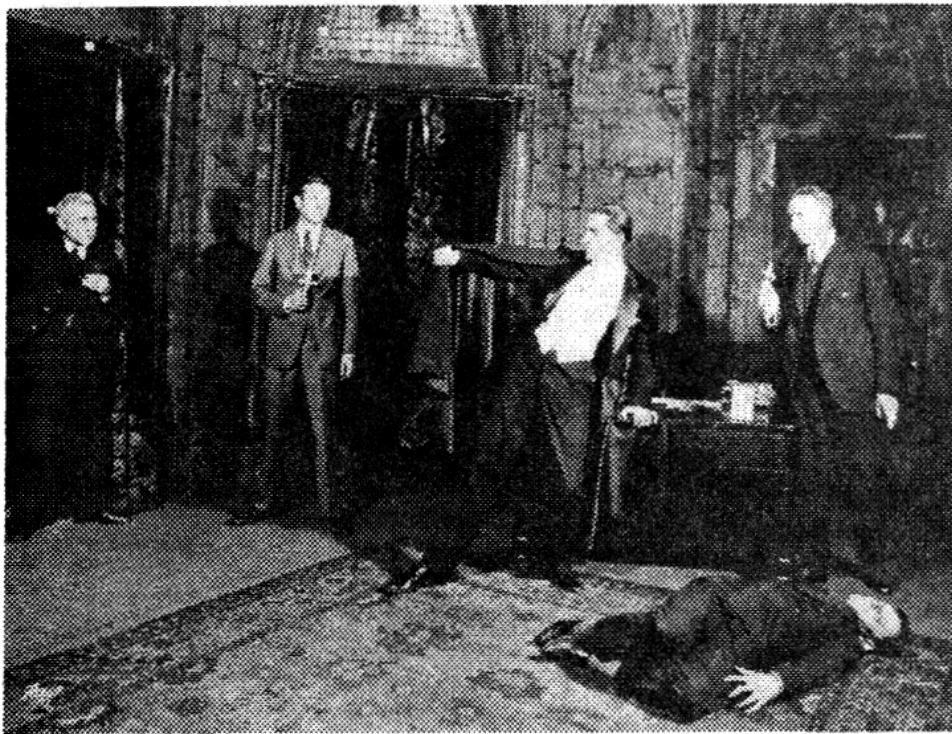
Indeed, one of the written directions in the play describes the Count as being, "A tall, mysterious man of about fifty. Polished and distinguished. Continental in appearance and manner." Deane's description fit Lugosi perfectly, and thus, it was Hamilton Deane who contributed on half to the entity's final creation. Lugosi took the role of Dracula when the play opened at the Fulton Theater in New York in late 1927. In so doing, Lugosi had accepted the dealing of a fate card that would be played out on Valentine's Day four years later when the Universal film opened.

Universal ballyhooed it as "The Strangest Love Story Ever Filmed." It was actually no more than a transference of the stage play onto celluloid,

which has always been the greatest criticism leveled against it. Throughout the history of the Dracula character in movies many have constantly lamented that the original novel was never adapted, but two attempts were made to rectify this. Christopher Lee, the second most recognized Count, understandably disappointed with the inane Hammer sequels he walked through, often said in interviews that he wished he could do the part as Stoker had written it. He was able to realize this wish when he donned the cape again in the 1970 Spanish/British film *Count Dracula*, which was more faithful to the original novel, and was a flop. Even the high-profile director, Frances Ford Coppola, failed with his recent, lavish *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.

The success of *Dracula* is a melding of the

(continued)



character, an urbane undead, and the actor, Bela Lugosi. He brought to the screen portrayal the solitary cohesion the story was ever in need of, a uniting force both the book and the play previously lacked.

The weight of the entire production, on stage or in the film, rested squarely on the black-caped shoulders of the villain. What had been essentially a slow-moving, disjointed novel was pared down to a one-dimensional, sparsely-dialogued stage play, which then became an even weaker screen-play.

In the 1931 film the Dracula character has fewer lines than the comedy-relief players. How, then, did this watered down idea succeed so enormously? Why did the Dracula personae so firmly entrench itself in the popular psyche? The obvious answer is, Bela Lugosi.

Every element of the rest of the story works because of Lugosi's performance. His imposing physical presence and the very specific delivery of his meager lines ties together, embues, and accentuates the entire tale.

Had Lugosi only done the play, then an entire sub-genre of film would have been lost to us. But the Dracula specter was just biding the time it would take for Lugosi to don the cape and step before the cameras. Unlike the play, the film would be seen by hundreds more, and would thereafter endure for thousands more to thrill to.

Lugosi's lean dialogue became classic cinema utterances in his richly accented, deliberate, intoned voice. Very nearly every word he spoke is common knowledge today.

Lugosi emphasized each line to convey volumes more than the mere words told...

"I never drink...(a slightly raised eyebrow, a tilt of the head)...wine."

"The spider, spinning his web for the unwary fly. (Con conversationally!!!) The blood is the life, Mr. Renfield."

"Listen to the; the children of the night. What music they make!"

He is hardly the unmitigated monster Stoker's Van Helsing would have us believe when Lugosi allows just a hint of humanity as he somberly remarks, "There are far worse things awaiting man, than...death."

Very definitely the actor and the character were made for each other. The vampire count took one a life of it's own and has been resurrected time and time again. And most often, he looks like Bela, not the description given by Stoker.

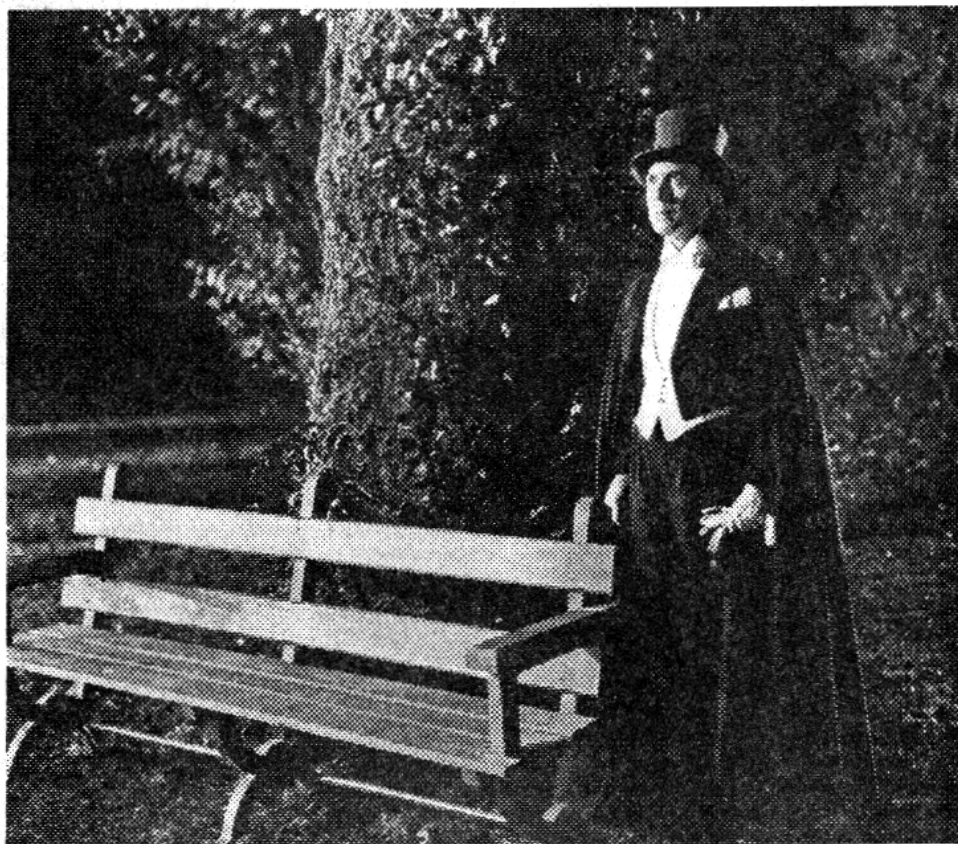
Lugosi transfused the character with the elixir for eternity: sophistication, poise, power, mystery, and majesty. Too often it is forgotten that Lugosi innovated the immortal visage of the vampire, without the aid of slitted, blood-shot contact lenses, without perfectly fitted, dentally correct fang inserts, without splashy gouts of fake blood. He acted the part. Using the full range and compliment of acting skills at his superb command, Lugosi imbued a pale character with a vibrant, brooding, powerful evil that gave the name a classic personae Stoker had failed to envision. The one-trick vampire of the novel became an entity of dark depths, secret sorrows, fierce pride, and an unbounded lust for the forbidden life-force that coursed around him, but only in the spider-like, elegant and capable hands of this actor did this come about.

Lugosi became the host for an undead birthing; fully formed, otherworldly wise, possessed of a preternatural power, immediately suave, sinister, and supreme, the persona of Count Dracula came into true immortality, dragging Bela behind him.

The actor paid the ultimate price to bestow this deathlessness upon the character. Forever after, Lugosi would not be able to break free of the cloaked mantle of this magnificent monster; like Victor Frankenstein, a monster he himself created.

The cost rendered bought us a blood-rich history of the vampire on film and in literature. Were it not for Lugosi, we simply would not know Bram Stoker's name today, much less the character he tried to create on paper.

The seal of infamy, and the placing of that name into everlasting popular consciousness, was achieved on February the Fourteenth, 1931, ten minutes into a black and white film, when Dwight Frye, playing Renfield, looks up and Bela Lugosi gazes down at him, saying, "I am...DRACULA." ■



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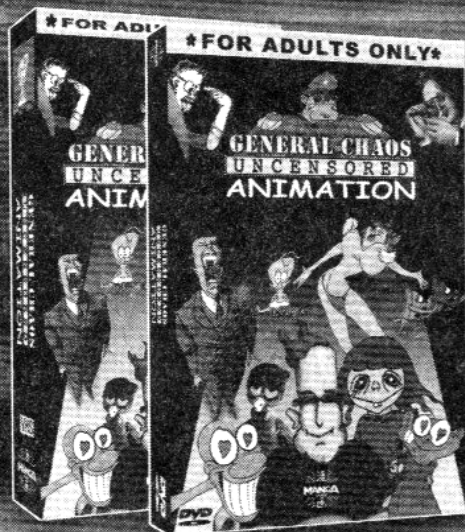
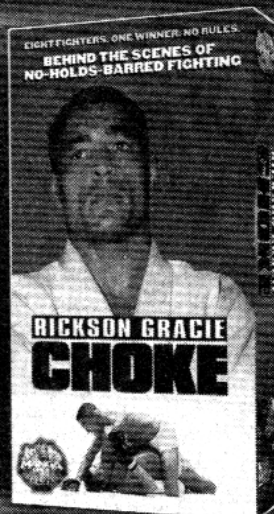
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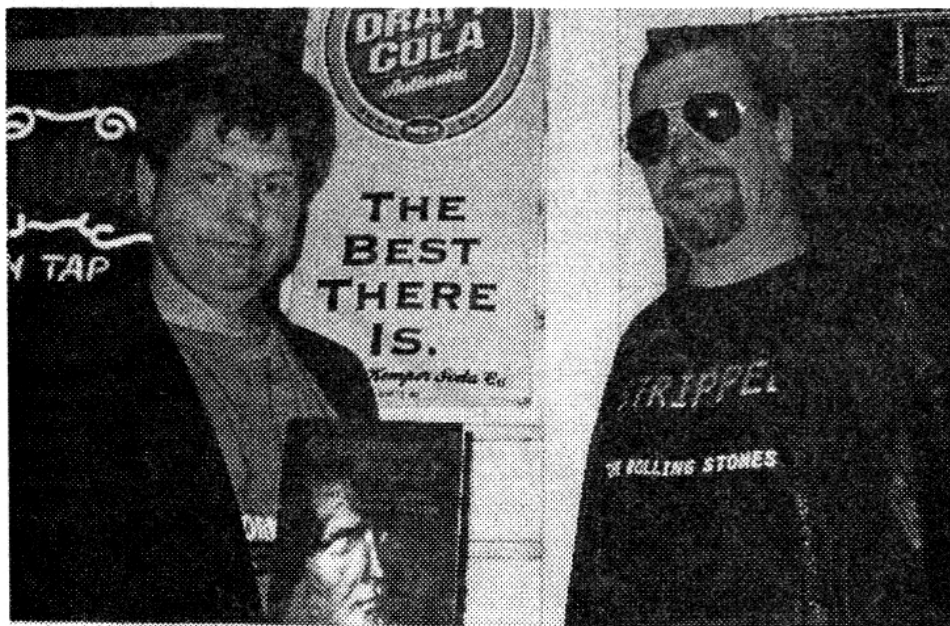
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George Reeves and *Speeding Bullet*



Cult Movies publisher Michael Copner and *Speeding Bullet* author Jan Alan Henderson.

An interview with Jan Alan Henderson

The fourteenth issue of our magazine contained a complete book-length biography of George Reeves, known as Superman to a generation of baby-boomers who became enthralled with the TV adventures of the strange visitor from another planet, dedicated to "Truth, Justice, and the American Way." The book was called "*Speeding Bullet*," and was written by Jan Alan Henderson, a commentator on film, music, television, and other areas of popular culture, and who appeared regularly in our pages from the very start. That fourteenth issue has become our most collectible back issue, reportedly selling on internet auctions for over \$75 per copy, although we still have a small stash of copies we're selling for only \$20 each.

For those who would like to own the Reeve's bio in a more permanent form, the good news is that it has been re-issued as a handsomely printed trade paperback. It's 161 pages and over 100 rare photos from Mr. Henderson's personal collection. One photo is especially "behind-the-scenes" and rather hard to look at—the unsettling sight of George Reeves TWO WEEKS after his death, in his coffin at Gates and Kingsley Mortuary. Other stills reveal how some effects were done on the Superman show, and others show a young, up-and-coming Reeves in Hollywood and years before his television fame as the Man of Steel. The book is graced with a foreword by Jack Larson, who sets the tone for all chapters that follow. He reveals that, back in 1951, his agent advised him, "Kid, take the money and run. No one will ever see it." Seemingly many parties concerned were actually convinced the Superman installments they were filming would never see the light of the broadcast airwaves.

It went on to become the greatest adventure series of it's kind ever filmed for television.

Most bookstores should be carrying the new *Speeding Bullet*. But you can order it directly from the publisher (Send \$19.95 plus \$3.00 for shipping to: Michael Bifulco, 414 Graceland N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49505).

To celebrate the publication of this book we decided to have a chat with the writer himself. Lots of water has gone under the bridge since *Cult Movies* first printed the bio, and we knew Jan would have a few things to say on the subject. Here, Mr. Henderson talks to us about the man who became Superman.

Cult Movies: Why a re-release of *Speeding Bullet* at this time?

Jan Alan Henderson: First of all it's not a re-release. There's new material in this one that was not in the first version, and there was material in the first one that's not in the new edition. It was completely re-written. And it is a reply to the negative response of *Hollywood Kryptonite*, an attempt to explain some of the misnomers that were put forth in that book. A lot of new information was made available to me after our first edition was published. People would call me up and have personal anecdotes that were meaningful, or say "I saw George an hour before he died..." and so forth. So the entire George Reeves story is a work in progress, and it goes beyond just *Superman*.

CM: Well, let's start with *Superman*. I'm curious about why the entire first season was shot, and then sat untelevised for over two years before anything happened?

JH: It appears that part of the reason was simply the search for a sponsor. When Kellogg's agreed to buy it, they wanted to do some drastic editing of what they considered violent elements, to make it more suitable to young kids.

There's an episode called "Mystery in Wax". At the end of that one there was a scene of all the cast members in Perry White's office having champagne. Well, Kellogg's didn't find that agreeable,

so they superimposed a shot of Superman flying through the air over top of them talking to offset the drinking element.

The reason they wanted to film another season in color in 1959 before George died was that they wanted to get rid of that first season. When they'd made all the edits they'd actually cut up the positive prints, so they thought the quality of those films was poor. And they knew color television was eventually going to be the state-of-the-art, so they planned to retire the first season. Ironically, over the years in syndication it's turned out that the first season has become the most popular.

CM: How many seasons of *Superman* were shot?

JH: Six. There were also two *Superman* features in the production office. One was called *Superman and the Ghost of Mystery Mountain*, planned for 1954, but no one recalls why it wasn't made. Same is true for *Superman and the Secret Planet* in 1957. No one has explained why these projects were curtailed, but scripts were written.

CM: When did you become aware of *Superman*?

JH: At age three. Even before I saw the comicbooks, I saw the TV show and started running around the house with a bath towel over my back pretending I could fly, just like every other kid in the neighborhood. That show was like magic to a whole generation.

CM: And you've got a pretty specific idea about the source of the magic!

JH: Sure. It was George Reeves. He was made for that part, and he made you believe in what was going on. It was as though he wasn't acting, which is always the mark of a good actor. The writing always has to be good, but the greatness happens when there's a chemistry between the material and the actor. Look at Fred and Ethel on the *I Love Lucy* show. By now we know that's two actors. But when I was a kid we had neighbors exactly like Fred and Ethel who used to come over to our house. And the magic of *I Love Lucy* was that everybody on the show was believable, regardless of the absurd situations. And the same is true of Reeves on *Superman*. It was his personality that put that show over.

CM: When did you get interested in researching the death of George Reeves?

JH: On the day he died. On June 16, 1959 Reeves died and immediately there were discrepancies about how that happened. Officially it was labeled a suicide right away. I couldn't believe he could die. And when I went to school that day there were kids who were leveled over the notion that Superman could be dead. The reason we could sleep soundly at night without having an atomic bomb land in our beds was because this guy would fly into where the evil was, and take care of business.

Now it's not to say that kids at that time were stupid, and that we didn't know he was an actor. But it's that coincidence of causes—first of all that we wanted to believe and also that George was a good enough actor to put it over. And for another thing, the studios sheltered the audiences a lot more from knowing how a character might appear to fly or break through brick walls. In the 1990s there are plenty of magazines around ready to show you how it's done with computer animation, and so forth. But in the 1950s that was kept

secret. It's hard to know which element was the most crucial. Probably the sheer strength of Reeve's conviction as an actor made it impossible for us to think of a split between the two, or doubt what he did on screen. And suddenly we're told Superman is dead.

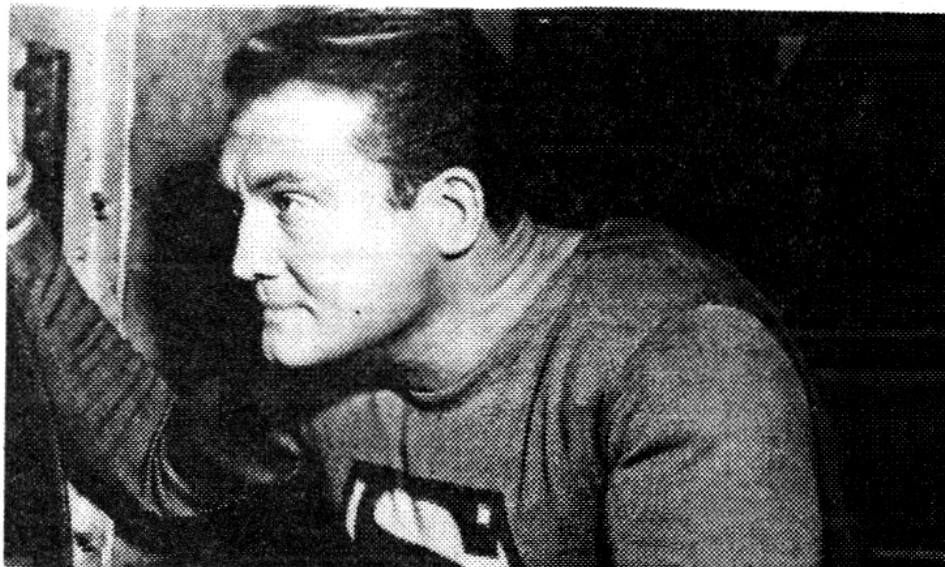
Then his mother came out to Hollywood from Indiana and there were questions that the press picked up on. I asked my mother about it and she said, "I don't think he shot himself." That was the trigger for me; I've been fascinated about the mystery ever since. I was already incensed, but the persistent discrepancy about whether it was murder or suicide made it worse. But at that early age, what could I do? Ride my bike over to the police station and say, "I'm eight years old and I wanna know what happened to Superman!"

CM: Whether murder or suicide, Reeves died from a speeding bullet to the head. And since then, stories of his house being haunted have appeared in the press from time to time. In this new edition of the book you devote a chapter to these stories, but tend to use words like "outlandish" and "tabloid fodder" in summing up these supernatural events.

JH: It's been reported that there were supernatural events. How do you confirm that? Personally I don't believe anything is going on.

CM: Police officers sat outside the house, saw lights flashing on and off, things were moved around in the house. Yet no one was inside the house and the officers saw no one enter or leave the house.

JH: How do you prove that? Where are those officers from back in the 1960s? There was an



investigation begun, but over the years the owners of the house have not encouraged outside investigation by credentialed psychic investigators. We're just chronicling one more aspect of the Reeves mystery as reflected in the press and letting the reader draw his own conclusions.

CM: What do you hope your readers will come away with when they've finished *Speeding Bullet*?

JH: Respect and a new understanding of Reeves. He made nearly 60 films in his life, beginning in 1939. At the time of his death he had several scripts on hand for science fiction films he was going to direct, and he had contracts for personal appear-

ances and starring in another season of *Superman*. So he wasn't somebody depressed or in a mind to commit suicide. He was looking forward to his line-up of projects. So I never bought the official story, and I don't think we'll ever know the entire truth about how he died. I've said over and over that the George Reeves Story is a work in progress. It will never be 100% resolved. All we can do is enjoy his acting talent and be glad for the legacy he left us.

CM: Thanks for helping keep him alive with your writing!■



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I Eat Your Skin (1971)

Del Tenney's Science and Ceremony

By Bryan Senn

"You actually contemplate taking that lovely, voluptuous kook of a wife, whom you claim to love, and me, your breadwinner, whom you claim to be your best friend, to an island overrun with dead people practicing human sacrifices and voodoo for the sake of a good book?"—writer/hero to his agent.

Shot in 1964 but not released until 1971, *I Eat Your Skin* is actually a better film than its horrendous title would suggest. (Thankfully, no skin—or any other body part—is ever eaten). Filmed in and around Miami and Key Biscayne, Florida as the nondescript Caribbean Adventure (to disguise its horror status from local merchants/investors, according to second unit director William Greffe), the film's title metamorphosed into *Zombie* and then *Voodoo Blood Bath* before ultimately becoming *I Eat Your Skin* upon its much-delayed release.

"I always thought that voodoo was very interesting, an interesting kind of religious ceremonial, and the whole thing of killing the chicken or whatever they did, was an interesting theatrical event and was kind of fun, if you want to call it that," related writer/director Del Tenney to this author about why he chose to spice up his self-proclaimed "low-budget adventure film" with voodoo. "It had a certain sense of theatricality."

After producer/director/scripster Tenney's success with *Horror of Party Beach* and *Curse of the Living Corpse*, he was on a roll (these films, along with his *Psychomania* had made Tenney over a million-and-a-half dollars!). Unfortunately, with his new voodoo project, the momentum couldn't quite carry Tenney over that next distribution hill—for *Voodoo Blood Bath* remained unreleased for seven years. (Tenney had planned to make a ready-made double feature consisting of a Frankenstein/Dracula film [succinctly titled *Frankenstein Meets Dracula*] and the voodoo picture. When *Voodoo Blood Bath* generated no distribution interest, however, the 'Monsters Meet' project died on the celluloid vine.)

Even in 1964, shooting a low-budget horror film in black and white and expecting to find a decent (or any) distributor was an act of pure optimism. "What happened," Tenney recounted, "was that the bottom fell out of that kind of genre—grade-B black and white movies with no names in the cast. So I couldn't sell the package of *Frankenstein Meets Dracula* and *Voodoo Blood Bath*. I thought it was a good package but 20th Century-Fox said I don't think we're going to be able to take these pictures.



So [*Voodoo Blood Bath*] was the last one I did." Tenney shelved his final feature and worked for the remainder of the sixties as a television producer before ultimately returning to the legitimate theater, his first love. ("I'm a stage director, you know, and have always been sort of a 'priest of the theater.' I've directed probably 150 to 200 plays and have been involved with certainly over 300 plays. All this [movie work] was done sort of tongue in cheek, for the commerciality of it.") Tenney also began a very lucrative real estate business, which he supervises to this day. He

never made another feature.

Tenney's voodoo movie might still be moldering on the cinematic shelf today had it not been for producer Jerry Gross who, in 1971, needed a second feature for his rabid hippie opus *I Drink Your Blood*. Gross purchased *Voodoo Blood Bath* for about \$40,000 (only a third of its cost—"on *Voodoo Blood Bath* I took a bath," laughed Tenney) retitled it *I Eat Your Skin* and advertised the pair as "Two Great Blood Horrors To Rip Out Your Guts!" Compared to the mean-spirited *I Drink Your Blood*, Tenney's cheesy co-feature becomes downright enjoyable.

Writer/playboy Tom Harris (William Joyce) journeys with his agent (Dan Stapleton) to a small private island in the Caribbean (succinctly named "Voodoo Island") to research and write his next bestseller. Upon arriving, Tom is menaced by zombies, meets a mad scientist (Robert Stanton) combining snake venom and radiation to find a cure for cancer, and falls for the doctor's beautiful daughter, Jeanine (Heather Hewitt). The natives seem intent upon kidnapping Jeanine and sacrificing her to their voodoo gods, Jeanine being the only blonde virgin around for miles (though Tom's irresistible charm soon changes THAT). After more encounters with the oatmeal-faced zombies and escapes from the natives, Tom rescues Jeanine from under the sacrificial knife and makes his escape.

As their boat speeds away, the dying scientist (who'd taken a native knife in the back) makes his confession/explanation: "Instead of getting closer to a cure for cancer, the bombarded snake venom was setting up a curious reaction in the body tissues, making the subject devoid of will—a human vegetable" (as well as turning their faces into oatmeal and their eyes into what looks like fried eggs). The local plantation overseer (Walter Coy), posing as the voodoo high priest Papa Negro, had been blackmailing the misguided scientist into "creating an army of these unfortunate people." The island blows up (the scientist had set the equipment in his lab to explode) and Tom returns with Jeanine to civilization.

Principal photography was completed in three weeks (a luxurious schedule for Tenney, whose three previous features had all been shot in two). This longer schedule, however, was not the director's idea. "That was simply the way it worked. Union-wise you had a certain schedule. I even had to have union drivers; it suddenly became a whole different ball park." Had it been a non-union picture (like his other films), Tenney would have probably completed it in his usual fortnight time-frame. "We had a lot of trouble," Tenney recalled about filming *I-Eat-Your-Caribbean-Zombie-Blood-Bath*. "First of all we had a hurricane which caused about a week's delay. Secondly, it was the first film that I did union. When 20th Century-Fox picked up *Curse of the Living Corpse* and *Horror of Party Beach* and played them in drive-ins, being union, they insisted that the next film I did was union. So instead of costing the usual forty or fifty thousand dollars which is what the others cost, this one cost me about a hundred and twenty thousand." Unused to union regulations and restrictions, Tenney tried to circumvent them whenever he could. "When I closed down the filming with actors, I did a lot of pick-up stuff. And I used my friends and my crew and whatever people I had that were not union people that I'd brought down—and myself and my brother and my wife (who's an actress) and so on."

Such nefarious (by union standards) activities turned around and bit him in the end. "They [the union] got wind of the fact that I was shooting off the cuff. And they did not like it at all. I threw a party at my house that we were renting on Key Biscayne for the whole cast and crew and everybody that was involved and catered it—quite a nice affair I thought. They set all the curtains on fire and ruined several sofas—they poured drinks on the sofas, the union guys—to get back at me. It cost me four or five thousand bucks in repairs and

damages. So I'm not a very thankful person as far as the unions go [laughs]." Of course, Tenney went on to remark that he himself has belonged to several unions, including SAG, Equity, and AFTRA, and is not anti-union perse. "I just thought that those particular [union] people down there treated the situation badly. And the fact that I was funding the thing myself was never taken into consideration."

Other (non-union) difficulties arose as well. "Half the crew was going to the hospital with



snake bites or malaria or whatever the hell was going on," remembered Tenney. "Everybody was getting sick because they weren't used to being out in the jungle like that."

A few tropical bugs were not the only physical menace around, however, and, though ignorant of it at the time, one cast member narrowly escaped disaster. "You remember the sequence where the heroine was swimming out in the bay?" asked Tenney. "Well, the day after we shot that movie, we were talking to the Coast Guard and they told us that particular bay was infested with sharks! I was like, aaargh, I can't believe that I would put her in jeopardy like that!"

Despite the contrary weather, unions, viruses, and just-missed predators, Tenney still found *I Eat Your Skin* "an enjoyable picture to shoot. It was a fun movie to make. The cast was terrific. Everybody was very cooperative. For a low budget film we had a lot of special kind of stuff with the boats and the airplane and all the special effects, the makeup and the snakes and all that. It was very interesting and fun to do. I enjoyed working on the film."

Though not as enjoyable to watch as Tenney's wacky *Horror of Party Beach*, and not as slick as his *Psychomania* or *Curse of the Living Corpse*, *I Eat Your Skin* still maintains that combination of hard-edged violence (shocking decapitation; gruesome zombie faces) and the raw energy (ceremonial sequences and chase scenes) which make Tenney's features as memorable as they are.

Technically, the film plays just slightly below the competency level. Most scenes had to be overdubbed, and the poor quality sound and (mis)matching shows ("I could never get good enough sound on location," commented Tenney, "we did a lot of looping.") Also, apart from the few

ceremonial sequences (which admittedly make atmospheric use of sinister shadows and flickering firelight), the film is often poorly lit in that dull, flat style common to black and white pictures of the fifties and early sixties. The trashy model of the island blowing up (with bits of papier mache flying into the air with tiny goutts of flame) is on about a par with Ed Wood. The acting ranges from adequate (Walter Coy giving a fairly good Cameron Mitchell impersonation) to downright annoying (Betty Hyatt Linton's nasal interpretation of the agent's air-headed wife). Lon E. Norman's intrusive and often inappropriate jazz score (with trumpets blaring and drums pounding like a *Johnny Quest* episode) doesn't help.

Tenney's occasionally absurd script (combining the old mad-science-zombie and radiation chestnuts of the previous decade with large doses of cheese) does little to flesh out the characters, though he seemed to want to make his writer hero into a literary version of James Bond since he alternately jumps into action and jumps into the sack with equal aplomb. (In fact, Tenney told the locals that this was exactly what he was filming—a 007-style adventure film. "There was a kind of stigma about turning Caribbeans into zombies and so on," remarked the filmmaker, "and I thought they would be more receptive if they thought it was a James Bondish-type of thriller rather than a zombie film. As I look back on it, it was stupid because, you know, they didn't really care.") Fortunately, Tenney keeps the story moving at a fairly brisk pace via the various zombie encounters and native chase scenes.

"It has been a long time since any [monsters] have come along as terrifying as the humanoids in *I Eat Your Skin*," (over)stated the film's pressbook. "These weird humanoids are enough to make one jump out of his skin, which, incidentally, is exactly what this horror-chiller is all about." Though the PR boys definitely exaggerated their merit, the movie's zombies do provide a few genuine shudders, and so fulfill the first rule of zombie cinema—dead people should be scary. With their cataract-covered eyes, flaking, wrinkled skin, and tall, gaunt frames, these "humanoids" (as the pressbook labels them) wield machetes (one decapitates a local fisherman) and take bullets to the chest (the holes appearing in the dead flesh one by one) without missing a step. Never mind that they're really a product of science rather than sorcery (and consequently should be stopped by bullets since they're actually live people transformed into human vegetables.) It still makes for some startling moments. ("I had to hire two or three union makeup people, which was very expensive," complains Tenney, "but they did a good job.")

Apart from the zombie encounters, the film's highlights are the convincing voodoo ceremonial scenes. This is a rarity in voodoo cinema, since so often filmmakers stage their dancing/sacrifice/ceremonials in such an ineffectual, lackluster, and trite manner that these supposedly sacred ceremonies become moments of voyeuristic derision. Fortunately, Tenney took care with his rituals, insuring that the participants invest both enthusiasm and energy into their roles, their bodies writhing in ecstatic rhythms as shadowy lighting plays over their rapt forms. Consequently, one actually comes to believe in their beliefs—or at least in their

(continued)

earnestness—which carries the viewer beyond the sensationalism of the moment to feel some small measure of the appeal of Voodoo.

Tenney reported that he "read several books on voodoo," before writing the screenplay, but noted that at the time "there wasn't a lot actually, there's not a lot on it. So basically we sort of had to make it up as we went along as to the ceremonies and so on. Most of it was just our imagination.

"We did have a kind of a [voodoo] expert as an advisor," continued Tenney. "And he told me basically that some of the story had a basis of truth in it—that snakes are always used in voodoo ceremonies, and chickens, and so forth. Also, there was a cult of voodoo Caribbeans that did believe that snake venom was a cure actually for whatever particular thing they had down there at that point. So there was a basis of truth in the storyline." Hmm. Perhaps a bit of wishful thinking?

Reviews were (and are) invariably harsh. *Castle of Frankenstein's* Calvin T. Beck labeled it an "ex-crable zombie cheapie" in which "crusty-looking native monsters walk around amid endless tribal dancing and Disembodied-level dialogue. Even Mantan Moreland couldn't have saved this." *Fangoria's* Dr. Cyclops called it "a feeble voodoo picture." Singling out the "horrible acting" and "terrible makeup," he concluded "Certainly atrocious on every count, but not as laughably inane as *Horror of Party Beach*, Tenney's masterwork."

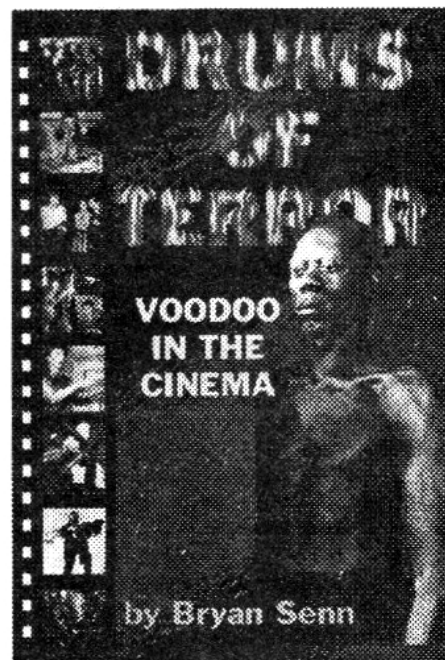
When asked what he thought of the finished film, Tenney laughingly admitted, "didn't like it very much; I thought it was sort of silly." While certainly far from the best voodoo pictures of the

sixties and seventies, *I Eat Your Skin* is not as bad as all that and still deserves a look for its effective zombies and involving voodoo sequences. Despite his sci-fi denouement, Del Tenney did Damballah proud.

CREDITS: Director/producer/screenwriter: Del Tenney; Associate producers: Dan Stapleton, Jesse Hartma; Director of photography: Francois Farka; Music composed and conducted by: Lon E. Norman; Art director: Robert Verberkmof; Second unit director: William Greffe; Production manager: Mel Pape; Editor: Larry Keating; Assistant editor: Monty Swartz; Camera operator: Ed Gibson; Assistant camera: Leonard DeMunde; Sound recording: Edmund Wright; Makeup: Guy Del Russo; Casting director: Doris Bernhar; Production secretary: Frances Hidde; Costume supervisor: Jane Hagerty. Released in 1971 by Cinemation Industries; 81 minutes.

CAST: William Joyce, Heather Hewitt, Walter Coy, Dan Stapleton, Betty Hyatt Linton, Robert Stanton, Vanoye Aikens, Rebecca Oliver, Matthew King, George-Ann Williamson, Don Strawn's Calypso Band. ■

Bryan Senn is the author of *Golden Horrors: An Illustrated Critical Filmography of Terror Cinema, 1931-1939* (McFarland, 1996) and *Fantastic Cinema Subject Guide* (McFarland, 1992). This article is excerpted, with permission, from Senn's new book *Drums Of Terror: Voodoo In The Cinema*. It can be ordered (\$23.00 postpaid) from Midnight Marquee Press, 9721 Britinay Lane, Baltimore, MD 21234: Phone: (410) 665-1198 or 1-800-886-0313 (orders only).



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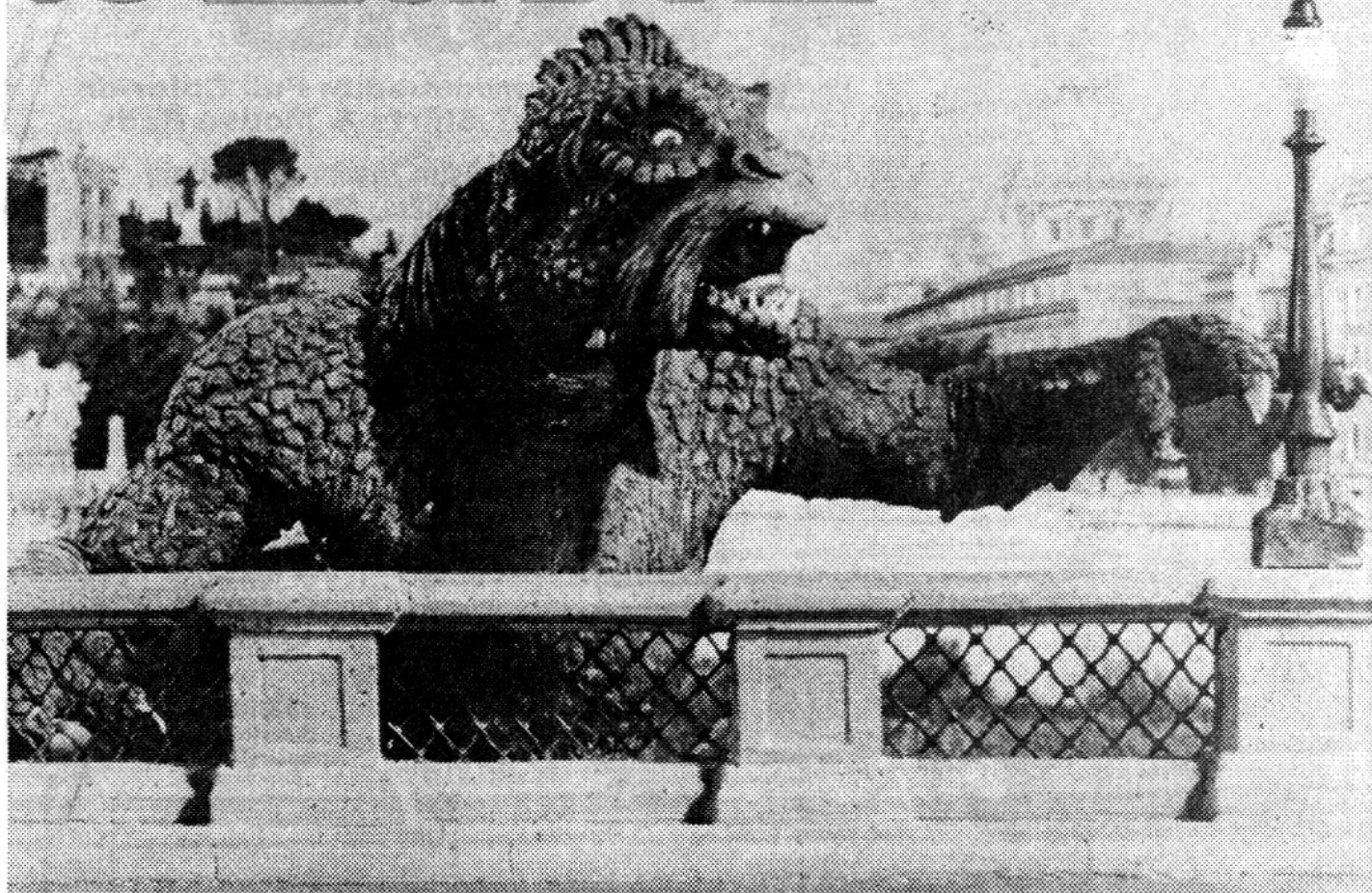
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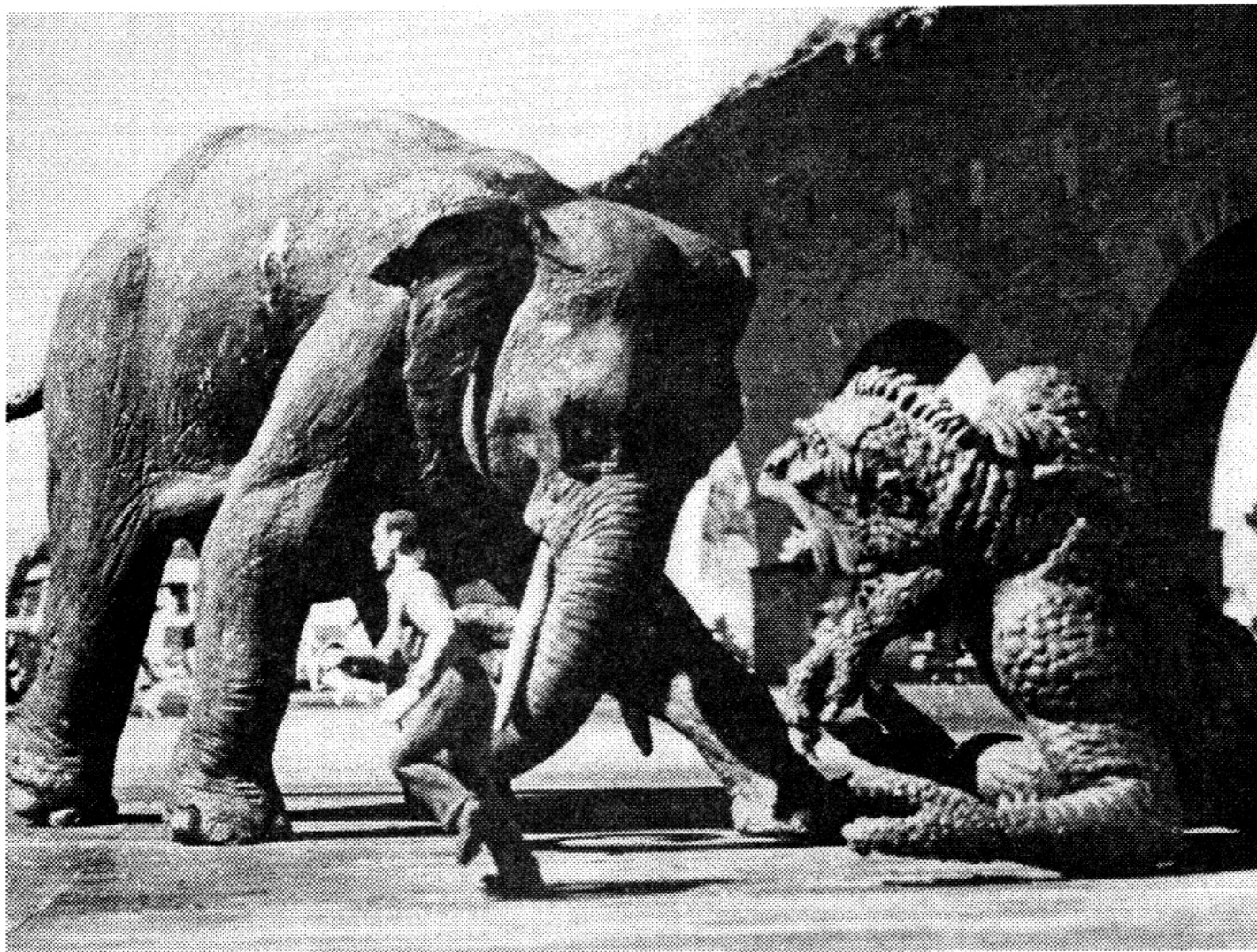
By Wayne L. Hatley

Some time back a young man was in my office with some artwork he wanted cleaned up. Looking around the room he noticed the poster of *20 Million Miles To Earth* and said, "I saw that movie. It was OK, but the effects were kinda cheesy." KINDA CHEESY!!!

I immediately flew into a lecture on the film, the man who created the effects, and the history of stop motion animation in general. All of which fell on deaf ears, no doubt. This relates a problem with many fantasy films of today; lack of story and filled with big budget special effects to awe a young audience. One remake from 1998 comes to mind. Granted, film making has advanced over the years, but everything didn't always come from a computer. The birth of stop motion animation came from one important entity - imagination. Ray Harryhausen was influenced at an early age by master Willis O'Brien and became his understudy on *Mighty Joe Young* in 1948. Ray did more than 80% of the animation on the film. In 1955 with *It Came From Beneath The Sea* his association with Charles H. Schneer began and by 1957 Ray already had three major productions under his belt. Ray's association with producer Schneer would last nearly two decades.

In the early 1950s Ray had dreamed of doing a film with European locations and needed a story





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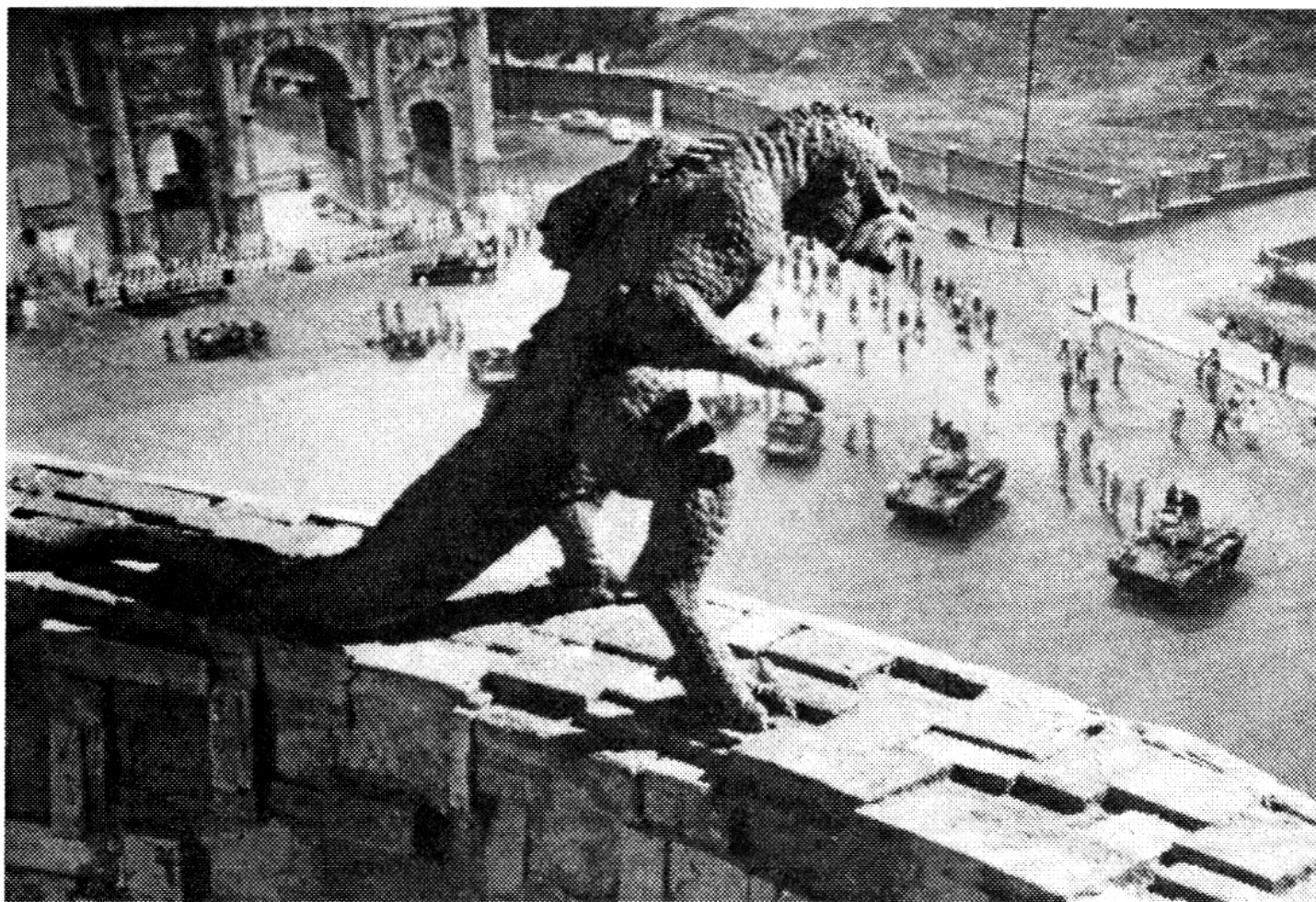
20 MILLION MILES TO EARTH



idea. What came to mind was "The Giant Ymir". At that time the story was filed away, however it would resurface four years later. The story was in need of some re-working. So Ray called on his friend, writer Charlott Knight who he had worked with years earlier. She liked the idea, made a few plot suggestions and began re-writing the story while Ray began sketching new illustrations for a presentation. Several companies looked at the idea, but turned it down. It was filed again, but only for a short time. Charles Schneer became interested and they started working on ways to budget the project. Once again, Ymir was born. Rome would be the location, with its enormous background possibilities. The film was released in 1957 as *20 Million Miles To Earth*, and it would be a presentation of Ray's best animation to date.

A spaceship returning from Venus crashes off the coast of Italy. The local fishing armada rescues the only survivor, so they think. A container holding a specimen of the life on Venus washes up on the shoreline and Pepe finds it. Wishing for a Texas cowboy hat, this young boy sells the specimen to a zoologist friend. In a very striking scene, Ymir hatches and is obviously sensitive to the light and his surroundings. Ray animates the creature in the actual size of the model on the Zoologists's kitchen table, giving the creature a sense of confusion and even fear. He is put in a

(continued)



cage for a trip to Rome the following day. However, during the night, Ymir has more than doubled in size. The only survivor of the crash (William Hopper), realizing that the specimen is missing, tracks down Pepe who tells him about the Zoologist, who is now on his way to Rome. By the time they reach him, Ymir has escaped. Due to the difference of atmosphere his rate of growth has changed and he continues to become larger each day. With the army in pursuit, they must capture the creature. At this point, one can't help but feel empathy for Ymir. Ray has always put his element into his creations.

Ymir is captured and taken to Rome for study. Here the background of Rome is used to its full advantage. Ray spent two weeks searching for suitable locations, the streets of the city, the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, Temple of Saturn, the Tiber River. Once Ymir escapes again, these monuments give the film an aura of grandeur which no other Sci-Fi film of the time could compete with. The Borghese Gallery became the background for the battle between Ymir and an elephant. Scenes were shot using a real elephant and Ray would substitute an animated model whenever necessary. He even included stop motion people running in front of the action which added realism to the scene. In another sequence, he animates a stop motion person caught in Ymir's grasp, while automobiles are turned over and the Roman landscape continues to crumple. Nonstop action, as nothing was left out in these complex scenes. In 1957, on the big screen, as you watched in amazement, you were sure, at that very moment Ymir was indeed

destroying Rome. Now on a total rampage, Ymir pops up out of the Tiber River and destroys a bridge the army briefly occupies. Tearing his way through the city, he heads for the Colosseum.

Ymir has now grown huge, and the film takes on an air of suspense as the army methodically tracks him down in the vastness of the Colosseum. Trapped, he climbs to the top of the structure, surrounded by the army's heavy artillery. Ray gives the monster both the look of rage and fear in his final moments. As the army opens fire, Ymir is wounded, falls briefly, but struggles to hang on to the ledge of the structure. Ray creates a scene here, with the camera position above the creature. The

army firing from below as Ymir continues to hang on holds tremendous emotional impact. As we watch the creature's final expression, we find ourselves rooting for him more than ever before. But with another cannon blast, Ymir falls to his death, taking much of the wall with him. In a time when most Sci-Fi creatures were lizards with a fin glued to the back or a man in a gorilla suit with a diving helmet on, Ray Harryhausen gave us realism, mixed with infinite amounts of imagination.

Whether it's a reptile from Venus, or a miniature horse, Ray has continued to keep us entertained and amazed. ■



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starring

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Screen Play by BOB WILLIAMS and CHRISTOPHER KNOPE • Story by CHARLOTT KNIGHT • Technical Effects Created by RAY HARRYHAUSEN
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Mat 1-A; Still No. 32

FACED OUTERSPACE DANGER!
William Hopper and Joan Taylor star in Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," science-fiction film at the Theatre.

Actor Uses 'Push' Instead of 'Pull'

In Hollywood, where many times it isn't what you know but who you know, William Hopper insists on making his own way to the top, despite his close acquaintanceship with some of movie-dom's top names. Currently starred with Joan Taylor in Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," science-fiction thriller of a creature from another planet at the Theatre, Hopper has rung up a record of fine film work that makes "pull" an unimportant and unnecessary element in his fu-

(Review)

When the first U. S. rocketship to the planet Venus crashed into the sea upon its return flight, its strange cargo survived, along with one member of the ship's crew. Their story is told in thrilling terms in Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," the science-fiction thriller starring William Hopper and Joan Taylor which opened yesterday at the Theatre. Probably nothing like "20 Million Miles to Earth" has ever before been shown on the screen. It is a truly spectacular, fearsome and entertaining tale in which the captive Venus-monster escapes, doubles in size over night, every night, and wrecks unimaginable havoc upon earth and its inhabitants, tearing apart men, animals and cities alike.

Hopper plays the officer and sole surviving member of the interplanetary expedition whose rocketship crashes into the sea off Sicily. Taken ashore by fishermen, he recovers under the tender ministrations of lovely Miss Taylor. Also recovered from the sea is a miniature specimen of the Venus-beast brought back to earth for study. The creature grows in size, smashes its chains and proceeds to run amok. There ensues one of the grimmest hunts in screen history as science and soldiers unite to smash the creature from outer space before it annihilates the earth.

Hopper is impressive in an authoritative interpretation of his role, while Miss Taylor is attractive as the Italian miss who supplies the romance in his adventurous life.

The screen play was written by Bob Williams and Christopher



"20 Million Miles to Earth" Mat 2-A; Still No. 17M
VENUS CREATURE! Human beings are helpless against a terrible beast from outer space in Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," science-fiction thriller starring William Hopper and Joan Taylor at the Theatre.

Outerspace Beast Journeys '20 Million Miles to Earth'

A new and different type of monster was created for Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," science-fiction thriller starring William Hopper and Joan Taylor at the Theatre, and the man behind this nightmarish creature is Ray Harryhausen.

(General Advance)

Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," science-fiction thriller of what happens when the first U. S. rocketship to Venus returns to earth with a monster from that distant planet, will be the next attraction at the Theatre, opening on Hopper and Joan Taylor are starred.

Doubling in size every night and impervious to conventional weapons, the monster is susceptible only to paralyzing electric shock. When it escapes during a power-line failure, Hopper commands the effort to recapture the creature, now grown to tremendous proportions. There is world-wide panic, from Washington to Rome, as the Venus-creature goes its rampaging way, destroying great bridges, battling mammoths to the death and defying military fire.

Hopper plays the U. S. Army officer who survives the crash of the rocketship which brings to earth the Venus-creature and who attempts its destruction when it runs amok to tear apart men, animals and cities alike. Miss Taylor, granddaughter of the zoologist who studies the creature in its captive state, prior to its deadly escape, provides a romantic note for the new film.

Bob Williams and Christopher Knight penned the screen play of "20 Million Miles to Earth" from a story by Charlott Knight. The amazing technical effects of the new science-thriller were created by Ray Harryhausen. A Morning-side Production, "20 Million Miles to Earth" was directed by Nathan

ture as a performer. William Hopper is the son of theatrical parents: his father was De Wolf Hopper, actor, and his mother is Hedda Hopper, actress who later became a syndicated columnist. Young Hopper tackled summer stock after high school and then Broadway. He appeared in several shows including "Roméo and Juliet," starring Katharine Cornell and Basil Rathbone. In Hollywood thereafter, he played in such pictures as "The Fighting 69th," "Brother Orchid," "Knute Rockne—All American," "High Sierra," "Santa Fe Trail" and "The Maltese Falcon."

Hopper saw some strenuous service in World War II, serving in both the O.S.S. and the Navy Underwater Demolition Team in the Pacific and winning all sorts of medals. After his honorable discharge from the Navy, he spent eight years successfully selling automobiles. Then his theatre blood boiled up again. He went into "The High and the Mighty" and "Track of the Cat," "Rebel Without a Cause" and "The Bad Seed," among other successful films.

"20 Million Miles to Earth" was written for the screen by Bob Williams and Christopher Knopf from Charlott Knight's story. Technical effects for the science-fiction thriller were created by Ray Harryhausen. Nathan Juran directed the Morningside Production for producer Charles H. Schneer.

'Monstrous Effect'

Ray Harryhausen, special-effects man who created some of the most spectacular technical effects in Hollywood films, reportedly has topped his most amazing performances for Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," which stars William Hopper and Joan Taylor at the Theatre. Harryhausen has created a monster from outer space which doubles in size over night, every night.

Juran for producer Charles H. Schneer.

New Science-Thriller

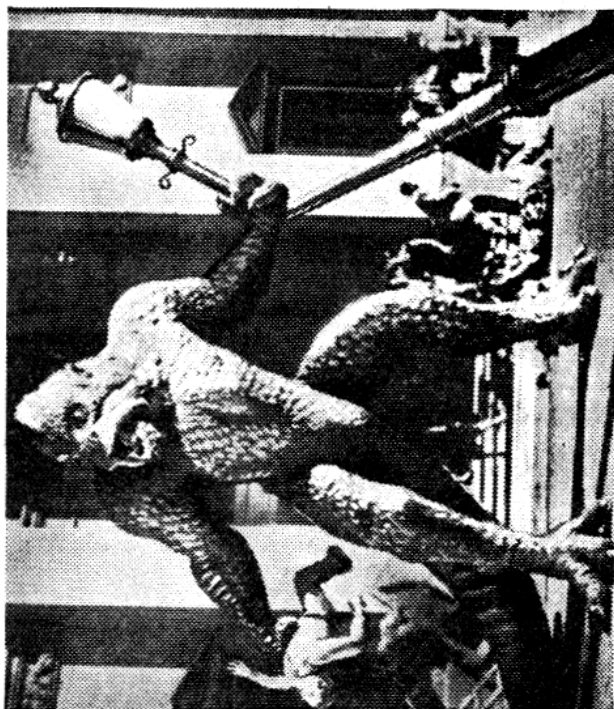
Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," the science-fiction thriller of what happens when another-world monster is brought back by a U. S. interplanetary expedition to Venus, opens

Theatre. William Hopper and Joan Taylor are starred in the story that was written for the screen by Bob Williams and Christopher Knopf from Charlott Knight's story. Ray Harryhausen created the technical effects. Nathan Juran directed "20 Million Miles to Earth," a Morningside Production, for producer Charles H. Schneer.

Knopf from a story by Charlott Knight. The amazing technical effects were created by Ray Harryhausen. Nathan Juran directed "20 Million Miles to Earth," a Morningside Production, for producer Charles H. Schneer.

Actress Has 'Kick'

Joan Taylor is on a science-fiction kick. Miss Taylor, who played the feminine lead in Columbia Pictures' "Earth vs. the Flying Saucers," is currently starred with William Hopper in the studio's new science-fiction thriller, "20 Million Miles to Earth," at the Theatre. It tells of a fantastic creature from Venus which wreaks havoc on earth when it arrives as a specimen aboard a returned spaceship rocketship.



"20 Million Miles to Earth" Mat 2-B; Still No. 16M
SPACE-MONSTER RUNS AMOK! A fantastic creature from outer space wreaks havoc on earth in Columbia Pictures' science-fiction thriller, "20 Million Miles to Earth," starring William Hopper and Joan Taylor at the Theatre.

nightmarish creature is Ray Harryhausen, one of the top special-effects men in the motion picture field.

Ray has been creating horrible, man-eating beasts from other worlds for feature films since 1946, when he was responsible for "Mighty Joe Young." He has since worked on such horrifying films as "Beast from 20,000 Fathoms," "It Came from Beneath the Sea" and "Earth Vs. the Flying Saucers."

Harryhausen's current "baby," "20 Million Miles to Earth," is probably like nothing else ever before shown on the screen, a monster dreamed up to fit a story which is probably like nothing else ever before written for the screen. It is a huge, human-type torseod beast, with a large, lizard-like tail, three-fingered hands and legs like a bird's. It is extremely smart in an animal way and possesses tremendous strength.

The creature travels "20 Million Miles to Earth" when a group of scientists reach Venus on a rocket ship expedition, and bring it back in a blob of gelatinous matter. Once on earth, however, it emerges from this blob and proceeds to double in size over night, night after night. Attempts to destroy the fantastic, deadly monster with bullets fail because of its other-world body make-up. The beast has no heart or lungs, but only a network of small tubes that run the length of its hideous body. Injure one and another grows immediately.

Only paralyzing electric shock can control the creature. It is mightier even than the maddened elephant which crosses its path when, in time, it escapes from the Rome Zoo during a power-line failure. Cannon fire cannot affect it, and it rampages through Rome spreading death, destruction and terror until it is ultimately forced to take refuge atop the ancient walls of the Colosseum.

Written for the screen by Bob Williams and Christopher Knopf from a story by Charlott Knight,

Film Beauty Began

As Dance Instructor

Unlike some innocents who unexpectedly find themselves in pictures, Joan Taylor began planning an acting career at an extremely early age. Currently she stars with William Hopper in Columbia Pictures' "20 Million Miles to Earth," science-fiction thriller of a creature from outer space, at the Theatre.

"Ever since I can remember I've wanted to be an actress," she says. "I studied and worked with that one thought in mind." Training started with dancing lessons from her mother, a former vaudeville dancing headliner, until she was graduated from high school. Joan was a member of the Chicago National Association of Dancing Masters when she was 16.

Joan was born in Geneva, Ill., but was raised in Lake Forest. Because she then was concentrating almost exclusively on her dancing, she didn't appear in very many school productions but, after graduation, she did consider going West to study dramatics at the Pasadena Playhouse. Joan spent a summer as a member of the ballet company of the Dallas Starlight Operetta and then put in three years at the famed Pasadena acting school. She got her first movie role through Victor Jory who recommended her for the feminine lead opposite Randolph Scott in "Fighting Man of the Plains."

"20 Million Miles to Earth," a Morningside Production, was written for the screen by Bob Williams and Christopher Knopf from a story by Charlott Knight. Technical effects were created by Ray Harryhausen. The science-fiction thriller was directed by Nathan Juran and produced by Charles H. Schneer for Columbia Pictures.

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Mickey Knox brought two too many horses, but neither The Man with Harmonica nor Sergio Leone was there.

**An exclusive interview with
Mickey Knox on his days
with Sergio Leone,
Spaghetti Westerns,
and His Career**

by Cenk Kiral

The man responsible for the unforgettable dialogues in Sergio Leone's two greatest westerns, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (GBU) and *Once Upon a Time in the West* (OUTIW), speaks for the first time in this exclusive interview about his experience with Sergio Leone.

Mickey Knox started his career as an actor in the late 40s. He made 16 pictures in 3 years. In 1951, during the McCarthy period, he was blacklisted and went to Europe to work in various European films. He lived in Italy for many years. According to the Internet Movie Database, he worked as an actor in the films *Knock on Any Door* (1949—Nicholas Ray), *Saturday's Hero* (1951—David Miller), *Bolero* (1984—John Derek), *The Lonely Lady* (1983—Peter Sasdy), *Godfather Part III* (1990—Francis F.



Coppola), and various TV series like *Vendetta: Secrets of a Mafia Bride* (1991), *Perry Mason: The Case of the Desperate Deception* (1990), *The Winds of War* (1983). He returned to the US to live about three years ago. After he worked with Leone, he didn't leave the Spaghetti Western world, and even produced a film, called *Long Live Your Death* (1971—D.Tessari). One of his latest works was in a co-production of HBO/Astoria Productions, called *Crime of the Century* (1996) in the role of Judge Trenchard. Although Internet Movie Database doesn't credit, during our interviews he proudly mentioned that he worked in the famous 1962 war drama, *The Longest Day*. He still works on script adaptations, and some acting.

I always found the dialogues of Leone films to be among the most interesting parts of the films. Short but powerful. Especially some of the one-liners have become essential flavors of these films for the Spaghetti Western aficionados. Over the years, they turned into memorable lines, almost as famous as the movies themselves. The power of dialogue reached the climax at GBU and OUTIW, which Mickey Knox worked on. His involvement with GBU began after the film had been shot, but he was deeply involved in almost all the stages of OUTIW. He was with the crew during the shoot-

ing of the film in Spain, Italy, and the Monument Valley. He was also the translator of Leone on the set. Over the course of many years, I have read several books and articles about these films, but so far I have never read anything specific about him. Then one day, I found out a telephone number and gave it a chance. Straight on my first try, I found him talking with me on the phone. We agreed on a future date for an interview. On January 18th and February 1st, 1998, I had two long interviews with him. Then, on March 21st, 1998, I went to see him at his modest house in Los Angeles. Afterwards, we had one more interview on April 9th, 1998 to wrap things up. So, the entire interview got quite long. Except for few matters, he was very open in answering my questions, telling everything he knew and remembered about those days. We are talking about almost 30 years of history, and he seemed to have a very sharp memory on some of the points. I can sense from the way he talked that it wasn't the best part of his life when he was working for Leone. Some of his memories are quite unpleasant, but that's the way he feels. Although his experience with Leone has given him the right credit to be the world's best dialogue director, he had some rough time with him. But, after all those years, he now rates Leone as the best

among the directors he worked for. He considers himself "basically an actor", but the blacklist period added to his career a whole new dimension. He recently gave a big interview for the book, called "Tender Comrades", mainly about his life in general, and the blacklist period. I read the book, and was really impressed by the depth of his experience. My interview here complements to that from Sergio Leone perspective. He said quite a bit that should interest Leone fans, and one or two things that should interest many cinema lovers. As one of his lines from OUTIW says, he certainly brought two too many horses, but this time there was only me.

So, here is Mickey Knox, with his own words, about Leone, Spaghetti Westerns, the blacklist period, and his career.

C.KIRAL: First of all, thank you very much for taking the time in helping me for this interview. You certainly are one of the important contributors of Leone's two greatest western films, and probably among the important witnesses to how those films were made...

M.KNOX: As I said before, he was a rather shallow man. He was a previously brilliant technician. But, as a director he didn't have any ideas that he wanted to convey. For example, Martin Scorsese, Orson Welles and all these great directors had some things that they wanted to convey, and their films show this. I don't think that Sergio Leone will be remembered like that, because he didn't have anything. All his films were fairy tales.

C.KIRAL: A lot of people in film magazines, or on internet say they find a quite lot of things in his films. He has many fans who truly enjoy his films.

M.KNOX: Of course, his films are enjoyable and full of action.

C.KIRAL: Can you please explain the function of your job when you were working with Leone and how you met him?

M.KNOX: Well, I think it was through Eli Wallach, who is an old friend of mine. His agent was also my agent, and he convinced Sergio to use me to direct the dubbing of GBU in New York, which means I had to adapt the whole movie into the proper English. I did all the dialogue. United Artists came to me and said "this is America, everything has to be in perfect synch". I mean the dialogue with the lips. That wasn't an easy job for that picture. Sergio didn't give a damn about the sound, because all of his films were dubbed after the pictures were finished anyway, many times different actors doing the dialogue part. So this gave him the freedom to shoot a picture without worrying about the sound, meaning visually he can do anything he wanted. And, in fact he did.

C.KIRAL: How was the script writing process working? Did the scripts already have the dialogue, or did you write it all?

M.KNOX: How it worked was this way: he had a very poor translation from the Italian, and in most spots the American actors changed the dialogue when they were doing it. So in many cases I had to re-lipped if I could. German actors had to speak German, Spanish actors spoke Spanish, Chinese actors spoke Chinese. In the end, all had to be done in English. I knew what they were saying, because I had the Italian script. I knew the sense of what they were saying. But I had to find out the right dialogue not only in terms of move the story along, but also to fit the lips. It's not an

easy thing to do. As a matter of fact, it took me six weeks to write, what they call, 'the lip-synch script'. Normally I would have done it in seven to ten days for a normal movie. But, that wasn't a normal movie (GBU).

C.KIRAL: So, when you started working with Leone, the Italian version of the scripts already had the dialogue, right? Let's take OUTIW for example, since your involvement is much more than GBU throughout the making of it. How exactly did the process work in that film?

M.KNOX: In that film, it already had all the dialogue in Italian. I had to adapt it to English, meaning that in many cases, especially in a Sergio Leone picture, where there are peculiar phrases, I had to find the equivalent, but not the same, in English. Because if you translate it directly from Italian, it makes no sense.

C.KIRAL: How about those ever-famous one-liners?

M.KNOX: In GBU, I tried to follow his intentions all the time. I didn't want to intrude my ideas of what the script should be. Most of them were his ideas. Sometimes, it was the actors' ideas. But, he was pretty good about that. He knew what he wanted and he did have a sense of humour. So, he did those type of one-liners in Italian which had to be translated to English. Some of them couldn't be. That's when I had to invent things that were American. A lot of the Italian quips, wits, and what you call as one-liners, weren't easy to translate, like in any language.

C.KIRAL: There is one quite famous of those "one-liners" in OUTIW, which goes like 'people like him have always something to do with death'. I am particularly curious about it. Was that line one of your adaptations, or was it already in the original Italian script as it is?

M.KNOX: Well, I wrote it obviously, but it was probably the same in the original Italian, but I don't remember exactly. All the English dialogue is mine. I mean, in terms of adapting it from Italian, but I didn't originally write the Italian script. Somebody else did it, like Sergio Donati, but the English version is all mine.

C.KIRAL: But, I must say that you've done an excellent job. Many fans of Leone still remember those famous one-liners. There are even books about Leone referring to those famous one-liners. Prof. Christopher Frayling, who wrote one book on Spaghetti Westerns, and who is about to release a huge book on Leone's biography, is anxious to hear from you regarding your efforts for Leone pictures.

M.KNOX: Well, actually the only two films I've worked for Leone were GBU, and OUTIW.

C.KIRAL: Which were probably the two best pictures by him...

M.KNOX: I think so too. Then, I broke with him because I wasn't a great fan of him. I mean, I was in the sense of a director. I told him personally years later that "you were great as a director, however, as a human being you were shit."

C.KIRAL: So he was really that bad as a person?

M.KNOX: Well, I've got to tell you that you could be dying of thirst, and lying in the gutter. He'll step over you and walk away. He had very little concern about others. He was a very tough guy. That's an aspect of him that I didn't like. To give you an example, we were staying in an Indian Motel at the Monument Valley during the shooting of OUTIW. During the evenings, the whole

crew always left good tips for the Indian waiters, because that's what these people earn to live. Sergio never left any tips for them. When I told him about this, he said the money he paid for the food already included gratuity. I told him that it didn't leave them that much, and they expect this, and they need it.

C.KIRAL: Did he later begin to leave any?

M.KNOX: No, never.

C.KIRAL: And, I guess this argument caused some real problems between you and Leone. You mentioned in your interview for the book, called *Tender Comrades*, that this argument was the reason for ending your working relationship with Leone. Was it really that bad?

M.KNOX: Well, it was a stupid argument. I wouldn't have done it that way today. It's all because of that stupid tip and Leone's stinginess.

C.KIRAL: And, did it really cause the break up of your relations?

M.KNOX: Yeah, on that same day.

C.KIRAL: You said in the same interview that he (Leone) took it out on you on the credits...

M.KNOX: No, he did include me in the credits. In my contract, I had a condition for the single card credit for the dialogue, which means only my name appears on the screen as "the original English dialogue" in OUTIW, and he (Leone) didn't honour the contract. He put my name on the list of technicians. In GBU I didn't ask for a credit, and they didn't want to give anybody a credit because they wanted the viewers to assume that it was shot in English.

C.KIRAL: But your name appears on the opening credits of GBU.

M.KNOX: Oh, it does? As what?

C.KIRAL: As English version of the screenplay.

M.KNOX: Oh, I didn't know that. So, they did give me a credit ha?

C.KIRAL: Yes, but I just watched the video version of OUTIW just to make sure, and your name wasn't mentioned in the opening credits. Also, I have a copy of the official publicity release document from Paramount Pictures, which I just checked again today, and your name wasn't included in any part of the credits.

M.KNOX: Sure, it is on the screen. I am at the very top of the list of technicians, and it says "Dialogue by Mickey Knox" and then it lists the rest of the technical staff, assistant director, cameraman and so on. It's on the ending credits. People have noticed it, and told me about it. As a matter of fact, I was once introduced to the very famous English writer, Graham Greene, in Paris. He immediately said "Oh, you wrote the English dialogue of OUTIW." Where did he get it from? From the credits of the film probably.

C.KIRAL: Didn't you have the rights to make a legal case out of it?

M.KNOX: I could have, but it's very difficult. It takes years and years, and I just didn't want to bother.

C.KIRAL: Have you discussed this issue with the producers?

M.KNOX: He was the producer. How could I have discussed it with him? My problem was my lawyer, who drew up the contract, was also a friend of Leone.

C.KIRAL: Was he Italian?

M.KNOX: Of course Italian. I was disappointed, because I thought I did a good job. I normally

(continued)



don't even ask for a credit, because if I don't like the picture I've worked with I just let it go like that. But, this one I really liked and I thought I did a pretty good job. As a matter of fact, as you know, he got Henry Fonda based on my version, not the version he originally had. Henry Fonda originally turned it down because he didn't like the first English version. Anyway, I would have liked getting the proper credit as I had in my contract, but he didn't do it so.

C.KIRAL: Have you been paid for it?

M.KNOX: Oh, yes I was paid.

C.KIRAL: Do you mind if I ask the amount?

M.KNOX: I don't remember what I got. You are talking about something done 30 years ago.

C.KIRAL: How was Leone's way of directing on the set? Was he a rough, excited, or was he rather a relaxed man?

M.KNOX: He was tense, but cool. What I mean is that the crew had a great respect for him because they were scared of him. He knew what he wanted. It wasn't like some directors who weren't sure what they wanted. He had always seen the picture in his head. As a matter of fact, the music (for OUTIW) was ready before the picture was made. So he knew everything. He knew what the music should be for every scene. I can't think of many films where the music was written before the movie is finished. He played the music when they were shooting the film.

C.KIRAL: How was the general atmosphere on the set (of OUTIW)?

M.KNOX: Good, very good. He had good actors.

C.KIRAL: Did the actors like working with Leone during the shooting of OUTIW?

M.KNOX: He was very good to actors. You know that actors love close-ups. Henry Fonda said to me he never had such wonderful close-ups.

C.KIRAL: Did you ever work with Henry Fonda again after that film?

M.KNOX: No, but I got a hand written letter from him, saying "Mickey, I know that you like to direct. If I can ever be of any help, please call on me. If I can help you out, I would certainly be there for you."

C.KIRAL: Why do you think Leone didn't use Eli Wallach instead of Jason Robards in that film?

M.KNOX: The reason I think he didn't use Eli in that part is that Eli was so connected to his "Ugly" role in GBU as a comedic actor. He played a comic part in that film. Whereas Jason's part was not a comic part. He (Leone) was worried that Eli would convey the idea that it was kind of a part that is unbelievable. None of his picture is believable anyway (laughter).

C.KIRAL: Was there any friction between Italians and Americans representing two different cultures? How was the coherence among the different cultures handled on the set?

M.KNOX: I tell you, I have worked in a lot of Italian pictures, and Italian crews are wonderful for two reasons: They are very, very good at their job, and also they are very sweet people. They have very good outlook about working with each other, and working with foreigners. They are wonderful!!!...

C.KIRAL: But, different from Americans...

M.KNOX: Well, they are the 'best' crew in the world. I have worked with Spain, England, France, and America. They are the best!!

C.KIRAL: I remember reading some articles,

where stars like Clint Eastwood was complaining about the film making process, loose schedules, messy organisations and so on...

M.KNOX: But, you've got to remember that American actors are used to certain kind of a regiment for schedules in America. The truth is, when I was in Italy, for many of the projects, the normal working day was 15 hours. May be it changed a bit over the years. But, that was terrible for an actor.

C.KIRAL: How was Henry Fonda reacting to that situation?

M.KNOX: Well, he didn't like it too much. He complained a bit, and Leone tried to make it easier for him. But listen, I was on a picture here recently where I worked for 18 hours, and the next day I had to be operated from my eye. So, they do it here too. They do it worse as a matter of fact now. Television is terrible!

C.KIRAL: How was the film making process working with the actors? Was Leone always using the translator or was his English enough to describe a scene?

M.KNOX: No, he knew no English then. He never learnt much English. For all his business affairs, he had his brother-in-law, who was an English teacher. But, on the set (of OUTIW) I did the most of the translating. He had me on the set throughout the whole picture. One of the reasons I was there was to help him in that area. His choice of actors was Charlie Bronson, Henry Fonda, to whom you didn't have to tell many things. They knew as much as he could ever tell them.

C.KIRAL: Is it true that Leone was very active in showing the characterisation himself on the sets?

M.KNOX: No, not for the stars. He did for some of the people, who were not really actors. I mean people who appeared for the small parts. He wouldn't do it for the stars. You wouldn't act out a part for Henry Fonda.

C.KIRAL: Was there any improvisation on the set, maybe through talking with each other, and developing new parts?

M.KNOX: No, there wasn't that much spontaneous action going on. The script was there. Leone was open to suggestions from people, but mostly they stuck with the script.

C.KIRAL: How was Leone's relations with the producers? Was he loyal to the production budgets?

M.KNOX: He was in fact sort of producer in those films. He did have somebody, who was the producer. Ehhhh, what was his name?

C.KIRAL: Alberto Grimaldi?

M.KNOX: He was in GBU, but in OUTIW there was somebody else...

C.KIRAL: You mean Fulvio Morsella?

M.KNOX: No, he was the brother-in-law of Sergio. He was also one of the producers. There was also another man, a very rich and noble man....

C.KIRAL: Bino Cicogna

M.KNOX: Yes, that's him. He was one of the producers. That man also put up money to produce the film, but in later years he had terrible debts. He had to leave the country, ended up in Brazil and found dead. They said he killed himself, but nobody really knows what happened to him.

(In this part of the interview Mickey Knox was referring to Bino Cicogna, whose name appears in the credits of OUTIW as associate producer in the

(continued)



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official release document of Paramount Pictures, but as executive producer on the cover of the video tape of the film)

C.KIRAL: Did all these things happen right after OUTIW?

M.KNOX: As I recall, it was pretty close to this movie, because he was very deeply in debt, and he had to leave the country....

C.KIRAL: All because of this film?

M.KNOX: No, no he had many other debts. As I recall, it wasn't because of this movie. I'd doubt about that because the film was very successful.

C.KIRAL: I guess he was not the only one who died among the crew of that film. What happened to Al Mulock, one of the three men of Frank, waiting for Harmonica at the little train station with Jack Elam and Woody Strode?

M.KNOX: Oh, the man who committed suicide. I don't know exactly what happened. Actually, I was with Claudio Mancini in a hotel room, and we saw the body coming down, passed our window. I guess he was a very troubled guy. Nobody knew what the hell was wrong with him, or why he did it. I think he was a Canadian. The interesting part was that we went down, and the body was on the ground. There was Sergio Leone over there. Claudio Mancini put him in his car, and drove him to the hospital. But, before that Sergio Leone said to Mancini "get the costume, we need the costume". The guy was dying there, and Leone was asking for the costume. He (Mulock) had the costume, that he was wearing in the movie, on him when he jumped down.

C.KIRAL: Where did this happen?

M.KNOX: I guess it was in a little hotel near or

in the town of Guadix. We were getting ready to go to the location, and he was wearing the clothes, that he wore during the film.

C.KIRAL: How did you finish the shooting of the film?

M.KNOX: He was unimportant. He was almost like an extra. He had very little to do.

C.KIRAL: But he was one of the three in that scene

M.KNOX: He already did many of his parts. I don't remember any troubles during the shooting days.

C.KIRAL: So, was the film (OUTIW) finished within the planned budget? In other words, how was Leone managing the budget of that film?

M.KNOX: Well, he was very lucky in that he was also one of the producers, as well as the director. So, he kept the budget in his mind anyway fairly loose, meaning that every picture has a budget before you start, but he rarely stuck to it. He made his own budget as we went along. He felt that the picture was more important than any budget. He always took a long time to shoot. He worked a lot of overtime. So, the budget was sort of elastic, since he was also the producer.

C.KIRAL: But, didn't Leone have any responsibilities to Paramount Pictures?

M.KNOX: He also had a very good relationship with the head of Paramount and Gulf Western company. He was a very rich and young man, originally came from some part of Europe. Ehhh, what the hell was his name? (he tries to remember, but couldn't recall the name). He made millions of dollars with Gulf oil. He liked Leone a lot. He thought Leone was a great director. So, Leone had

a lot of freedom to do what he wanted (in OUTIW).

C.KIRAL: Do you remember the overall budget of that film?

M.KNOX: Somewhere in the range of 5 to 8 million dollars. You know that 5 million dollars 30 years ago is like 25 million of today.

C.KIRAL: Did it run over the budget?

M.KNOX: It probably did because he took a long time to shoot. He didn't care about the budget, he only cared about the film.

C.KIRAL: Do you have the original script with you?

M.KNOX: When I left Rome, I threw all my scripts out. It was just too much. I had a tremendous pile of paper at home. I had something like 150 scripts, and I just threw them all out.

C.KIRAL: There are rumours that Clint Eastwood and Sergio Leone had a big argument in the dubbing studio of GBU? Were you witness to that?

M.KNOX: No, I tell you what happened. Clint Eastwood was working in another film, and couldn't come while I was working in the dubbing (of GBU). They did the whole dubbing of the film, except with Clint. Sergio Leone was so god damn cheap. I mean he was incredibly cheap, that he thought "well, I could manage Clint's dubbing myself" without paying me any salary and living allowance. He didn't want me to hang around to wait for Clint Eastwood, getting paid for doing nothing. So, I left. I did everything but Clint's parts.

C.KIRAL: So, Clint Eastwood spoke himself alone without any counter dialogue.

M.KNOX: Yes, that's how you do it. He could hear other actor's dialogue, and speak his lines.

C.KIRAL: I have recently read a book by Oreste DeFornari on Sergio Leone (*The Great Italian Dream of Legendary America*—by Gremese Int. 1997 in English), where there is an interview with Sergio Donati. In there, Donati says that Eastwood arrived at the dubbing studio with the first original version of the shooting script, and insisted on reading it. Then, Chris Mankiewicz (then the VP of United Artists) threatened him badly and forced him to read the latest version.

M.KNOX: Well, I know that there was a dispute, but Chris was running the project when I was doing it, and I am sure he was there after I left. My version was approved by United Artist that Chris worked for, and they were going to distribute the picture like that. That's why they were insisting on my version.

C.KIRAL: What exactly happened during the determination of the English title of the film? Who decided to change the Italian sequence of *Il Buono, il Brutto, il Cattivo* (which translates to English as *The Good, The Ugly and The Bad*) into "The Good, The Bad and The Ugly"?

M.KNOX: I think it was United Artists, who bought the rights of that film to distribute, and it was already *The Good The Bad and The Ugly* when I came to work on it.

C.KIRAL: Why was the theatrical release wrong?

M.KNOX: I don't know about it. I have nothing to do about it.

C.KIRAL: If you happen to watch it, there is a crucial mistake there, showing Lee van Cleef as "The Ugly", and Eli Wallach as "The Bad." It is very obvious, and they repeat it several times. It is included within the latest release of the film on DVD, with all the cut scenes...

M.KNOX: I know about that release. There was piece about it in the newspapers here recently. I contacted them, and they called me back, and I said to them I don't understand why the takes, which weren't used in the movie weren't translated into English. They evidently show the original Italian dubbing. They said "yes, you're right, but I don't know why they did it that way."

C.KIRAL: Maybe Clint Eastwood wouldn't accept it after all those days, and Lee Van Cleef is already dead...

M.KNOX: Well, I don't even think they tried. They probably didn't want to spend any money.

C.KIRAL: Anyway, back to the mistake on the trailer, how do you comment on that?

M.KNOX: It's stupid because Lee Van Cleef was not the Ugly at all. Eli Wallach was made up to be the Ugly.

C.KIRAL: How was it working in Almeria?

M.KNOX: In Almeria? Terrible (laughter). Guadix was terrible. Guadix was where we shot the railway station scenes.

C.KIRAL: Where exactly in Guadix? I went to Almeria and Guadix personally and tried to find the actual shooting locations, like that Flagstone town and that little train station at the beginning. But I couldn't find any of these places.

M.KNOX: Well, I don't know exactly, but I can tell you that we were in the middle of the desert. But, it was pretty far out. We had to get up early and drive there. It was hot and dusty.

C.KIRAL: Right at that point, let me ask you about the notorious fly, which appeared on the face of Jack Elam. Did that scene accidentally happen, or was it all planned before? A lot of people, including myself, still wonder about that?

M.KNOX: No no, that was one of the Leone touches. It was in the script. I can't remember how they did it exactly. I think it was a real fly. The prop man had a jar with bunch of flies kept up. It's very easy to get them to do what you want because you rub a little honey on where you want them to crawl.

C.KIRAL: So it was a real fly

M.KNOX: I guess so. I don't remember exactly, but the fly was so extraordinarily real in closeup. You know who can tell you all about it? Ask Claudio Mancini, the production manager. He would know about it for sure.

(Upon Mr. Knox's recommendation, I called up Claudio Mancini, and had a small interview. Although he covered many topics about this film, below are his words about the infamous fly subject: "At first we prepared a false fly with the special effect people, but it didn't work the way we wanted. We lost 1 hour with the false fly. Then we took a real fly and put marmalade on Elam's face, and the fly stayed there. We did it with just one real fly. It was a miracle. The drop of the water on Woody's head took 2-3 hours to shoot. The entire little station scene took 4 days. We shot that scene 3 weeks before we finished. It was the last scene we shot in Spain")

C.KIRAL: Any other interesting anecdotes in the shooting of OUTLAW that you want to add now?

M.KNOX: (Long pause) There are a couple them that I can't talk about now. Leone hated to quit shooting at the end of a day. He always took 16-17 hours and argued with the production manager saying "What are you talking about. We have only been shooting for 8 hours. It's not finished yet." He once said to me "I gave 5 years of my life in every

picture I made." And, I guess that's true, he died young.

C.KIRAL: So, even if you didn't work him again, have you seen him after OUTLAW?

M.KNOX: I ran into him couple of times. In one time, I told him that although he was great as a director, personally he was a "stronzo" (he explains that this Italian word can be used in many ways, but he meant "turd" in English). I use the Italian term, because it is much better. Turd is a literal translation. It is a pretty heavy insult in many ways, but here meaning full of egotism bad, and Leone laughed when I said this. (laughter)

C.KIRAL: As far as we can see from the books, your works with the Spaghetti Western world didn't finish after Leone. Can you tell us something about your career apart from Leone films?

M.KNOX: Oh yes, I was the executive producer of the film, originally called 'Viva la Muerta Dua' (a.k.a. Long Live Your Death), starring Eli Wallach, Lynn Redgrave, and Franco Nero (directed by Duccio Tessari in 1971). Wallach played a dirty Mexican bandit.

C.KIRAL: You mentioned in your previous interview that Franco Nero didn't want to work with Sergio Corbucci, because Corbucci showed most of his attention to the other actor in a previous film.

M.KNOX: Ah yes, Tomas Milian was the other leading star in the film, called "Companeros", and when I said to Franco that I wanted to get Sergio Corbucci as the director, he said "I won't work with him". I said "but he's the best for our movie", he said "oh no, no he snubbed me all through the picture, and he gave all of his attention to Tomas". I said "come on, what are you talking about? I know Sergio Corbucci, and he's a very nice man". He said "yes, but...". I don't know, I guess something must have happened. I have a feeling that something came up between Tomas and Franco, and Sergio decided in favor of Tomas. But, he (Franco) regretted it later.

C.KIRAL: What do you say about Sergio Corbucci as a director?

M.KNOX: He was a very lackadaisical producer, unlike Leone. He would show up 11 o'clock in the morning, where people had been waiting until 7. He was a very nice, lovely man but he was there just to make some money. He was a totally different kind of man as compared to Leone.

C.KIRAL: Looking back to the history of Western films all together, how do you comment now on what was done in the Spaghetti Westerns, versus the classical American Westerns?

M.KNOX: Well, you know Sergio did things that Americans never did. What Sergio had done was very authentic. For example, those long coats, called dusters that they wear in his films. Out in the west, they really used to wear them to protect themselves from all the dust. Sergio did tremendous research. He had a lot of books and photographs of the west. In the American Westerns, they discarded that idea because they weren't attractive. You know, they had tight pants, gun belts and so on. So, Sergio had all those details in his films. Do you remember the train in GBU with the cannon at the end of it?

C.KIRAL: Yes I do

M.KNOX: The train starts going, and at the end of it there is a cannon. I said to him "where did you get that?" He showed me a photograph in an American book. It was to protect the trains against

the attacks during the Civil War.

C.KIRAL: So, it is true what we read that he was a very meticulous man on all those details.

M.KNOX: He sure was. I never forget Sergio and Henry Fonda trying to find a proper hat for Fonda. I was with them. They tried hundreds of hats for hours. (laughter)

C.KIRAL: How did Charles Bronson get along with Leone on the set? As you know he previously turned down the Eastwood's role offered by Leone.

M.KNOX: Fine, no problem

C.KIRAL: How was the first meeting between Sergio Leone and Henry Fonda? I am curious about how Leone reacted when he first met Fonda, because, as you may know, Fonda had always been Leone's dream actor.

M.KNOX: As a matter of fact, I was there to translate. It was very cordial. The reason he liked him so much was that Fonda was one of John Ford's premier actors. John Ford was Leone's god. He had seen every Ford picture, and Henry Fonda was in many of them.

C.KIRAL: Were there a lot of takes during the shooting of Leone films? I mean, was he easily satisfied from one or two takes, or did he require many takes?

M.KNOX: Sergio did it until they got it done the way he wanted, which wasn't generally that many takes. It wasn't like William Wyler, who did 400 takes. He (Wyler) could never tell people what he wanted. No, no it wasn't like that in Sergio's films, because Sergio set up each scene in such a degree that he knew what he wanted, the actors knew what he wanted, and once you get the performances of actors like Jason Robards, who is a great actor, Charles Bronson, who does his own thing, Henry Fonda, how many takes do you need?

C.KIRAL: We know that you never acted the lead role in those Spaghetti Westerns, but can we at least see you in any of these Spaghetti Westerns as a bit part actor?

M.KNOX: I did very little because when I was hired I was always involved working with the director. I generally translated the script originally, then they hired me to work on the movie with dialogue and on the set translations of directors like Sergio Corbucci. So, I never really had a chance to act. In most of these Spaghetti Westerns, they generally had an American star, and an Italian star, everybody else was nobody. They didn't have the money to pay.

C.KIRAL: Leone also had sort of his own stock company with a small group of Italian actors always showing up in all of his westerns.

M.KNOX: There were some actors he used a great deal, also as stunt men. Because they were cheap, he hired them for the whole movie. Guys like Benito Stefanelli, Aldo Sambrell and so on. I knew them all. He would pay them very little money to act in it and to do the stunts.

C.KIRAL: Any last comments about working with Leone?

M.KNOX: The only last comment I have is, he wasn't a very nice person. I mean as a person. But, as a man who made movies, I have worked with around 80 directors, and I say he was really one of the top in terms of movie making. On the other hand, people can read whatever they wanted from his movies. He never had any profound ideas to express. As I said, they were all fairy tales, terrific stories on the script and turned out to be terrific

(continued)



stories on the screen. He was a smart guy. He never duplicated the American westerns, because it wasn't what he wanted. He had his own angle. His heroes were very tough, but in essence decent. I mean, decent in the sense that they would not kill women and children. Instead, he had Henry Fonda kill them. And, Henry said to me "They are going to kill me back in America. I've never shot a kid before." He (Leone) was very smart that he took Henry Fonda's sweet lovable, guy image to shoot the kid. Charles Bronson, another tough guy, who always played the tough, mean characters, to be the hero in OUTLAW. All those characters were his inventions in his head. You would never see heroes like that until his films appeared.

C.KIRAL: Would you have worked with Leone again if he had offered you a project, like in his last project about the Siege of Leningrad?

M.KNOX: Actually, a friend of mine was going to be the producer of that film. I don't know if I would ever work for him again. That picture was going to take at least 6 months in Russia. I don't know if I'd like to spend 6 months with that man in Russia. It's an enormous project. I don't think he would have ever done it. The last time I saw him in Cinecittà, he told me that he was going to do that picture. I said "I think you are a fool. It'll kill you". No director I have ever worked with before him ever worked so hard, so concentrated. The picture was in his mind for 24 hours a day, unlike most of the others. When the day is over they go home, they have a drink, it's all over. One of the reasons his pictures are so brilliant is because he devoted full time to his movies. But, I don't know if I would have ever worked with him again. Maybe if it was in some other place.

C.KIRAL: Have you ever given any interviews specifically about Leone before?

M.KNOX: No. I have been interviewed many times generally, and was asked about him, but none of them was in-depth specific about Leone.

As a matter of fact, they did a very long interview with me about Norman Mailer by British Television, and his name came up because I introduced him to Leone, and Leone hired him to write the treatment and the screenplay of *Once Upon A Time in America*. Norman delivered 200 pages of treatment

C.KIRAL: What's your relationship with Norman Mailer?

M.KNOX: He is my closest friend. I speak to him almost everyday. We are very old and close friends. There are several books, biographies written about Norman, and I was interviewed for him.

C.KIRAL: How did Mailer and Leone get along in the end?

M.KNOX: Well, in the end there was a warfare. I mean, the producer was suing Leone and Mailer. They didn't want to pay Mailer his last payment. Mailer won the case of course, and they had to pay him.

C.KIRAL: Can you tell us more about your career? What do you do now?

M.KNOX: I was an actor. I made 16 pictures in 3 years. And then there was the McCarthy period, and hundreds of us were blacklisted. There is a book called *Tender Comrades* by Patrick McGilligan and Paul B. I went to Europe. I worked on *The Longest Day* in France as dialogue writer and I acted. I also worked in Italy. I must have adapted 150 scripts, and acted in many films, I produced a film. I returned to the US about 3 years ago, after 35 years in Europe. I still do some acting now-days.

C.KIRAL: Looking at your career, you obviously had a tremendous experience with almost all methods of acting. What would your advice be to the young actors and students of acting?

M.KNOX: It's good to have those books on acting. It's good to read Stanislavsky's books. Everything is related with your cultural understanding. An actor should know about painting,

literature and etc. The acting schools teach people acting, but, on the other hand, you have people like Marlon Brando, who didn't need any of them. He was born to be an actor. I guess he's the best actor of the century.

C.KIRAL: Who would you rate as the best actor, among the ones who are still active today?

M.KNOX: Robert DeNiro is great. Al Pacino is an extraordinarily good actor.

C.KIRAL: Looking back now, it looks obvious that the black list period caused a dramatic change in your career. How do you comment on it now? Would you rather like to stay in the US or would you consider yourself lucky for being in Europe?

M.KNOX: None of that thing was luck when I was blacklisted and couldn't work. Luckily, I spoke French, and fairly good Italian at that point. I had a place to go where I could work. I mean I loved living in Europe.

C.KIRAL: But, you didn't plan to live in Europe...

M.KNOX: No, but you never know what might happen in a life. I know that I was in big demand for lead parts, when I did 15 in first 3 years.

C.KIRAL: But, if it wasn't for the blacklist period, you would have had a different career based in the US, right?

M.KNOX: Oh yes, I would have been at least an actor that would have worked. A man who played it, Gene Evans became a star of sorts, and died last week.

C.KIRAL: How did you learn that you were blacklisted?

M.KNOX: I learnt about it because a very good friend of mine, and an important producer told me. He said "you were blacklisted".

C.KIRAL: Did you fight against it?

M.KNOX: There was no way to fight back. Who do you fight against?

C.KIRAL: How long did it take for you to move out to Europe once you learn about it?

M.KNOX: I went to Europe in 1952 for the first time to work in Italy. Then, later I came back and worked as a dialogue director, because that wasn't blacklisted. People that were blacklisted were actors, directors, producers. They didn't give shit about the dialogue directors. So, I did a lot of pictures as a dialogue director in Hollywood.

C.KIRAL: Mr. Knox, I thank you very much for your time. I just would like to mention one more time that many Leone fans, like myself, appreciate your contribution to Leone's two big western films. So, on behalf of all the Leone fans, thanks again.

M.KNOX: Oh, well, I am flattered. In much of the dialogue of these films, as I said, I had to think of proper English parts. I couldn't directly translate from Italian, because it wouldn't make any sense. But, thanks for your comments anyway.

C.KIRAL: No, no, really, I am not joking

M.KNOX: So, it's not a joke, it's rope ha?

(Note from Cenk Kiral: The entire interview is the collection of four interviews I made with Mr. Knox on January 18th, February 1st in 1997, and March 21st, April 9th in 1998, and all the conversations were taped.

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Japanese Erotica

Two Arty Films Raise Eyebrows & Issues



by Michael Copner

For several issues in a row, our magazine has been following the progress of two unique Japanese art films from the 1970s. We believe these films should be of interest to any student of the cinema, since they are films virtually unknown outside of Japan, and do not fit neatly into any existing genre of film known in the United States. The word that they were finally about to receive an American theatrical release was news indeed!

The films are *Wife To Be Sacrificed* (1974) and *A Woman Called Sada Abe*, or *Beyond The Realm of the Senses* (1975), both emanating from the infamous Nikkatsu Studios, among the nation's major motion picture producers, among the ranks with Daiei, Toho, Shintoho, Shochiku, and Toei. The films are notable for their extreme sexual themes, storylines which often feature bondage and torment of beautiful, helpless young women. But if an American interprets this as anything approximating the nature of a western world hard-core (or even soft-core) pornographic film, they will be disappointed. These films are crafted by big stu-

dio writers, directors, actors, musicians and technicians with all the care and attention to detail of any other big studio production. It would be something akin to MGM or Universal or any of our American studios turning out the highest quality film the studio-system would be capable of, which happened to have an adult theme.

The March 1957 issue of *Films In Review* magazine reflected America's growing interest in Japanese cinema with three articles covering the then-current scene. In his "Japanese Filmmaking Today" article, Clifford V. Harrington comments that, "Nikkatsu is the most modern studio in Japan and has ten sound stages and excellent recording facilities. Nikkatsu is technically comparable to those in the U.S." It was obviously a busy studio, as later he remarks that, "It is a rare day when at least eight of ten stages are not occupied. A stage remains empty for only a day or two." At that time the studio was releasing six to eight films per month, including comedies, musicals, semi-documentaries, and war dramas.

By the 1970s, Nikkatsu had created a new category of their own, and went on to dominate this unusual specialty, which they termed "Roman-

porn". The romantic pornography genre was originated and defined by Nikkatsu, who went on to be the main exponent of this national curiosity. Unlike European or American adult films of that same decade, the Japanese films never showed male or female genitals, thus the infrequent portrayals of intercourse were simulated and carefully staged and photographed to often obscure the actors' loins with a desk-clock, flowerpot, or some other prop get in the way of everything. Actresses prepared for the scenes by wearing a flesh covered masking-tape over their genitals to insure that not even a single pubic hair could be seen on film. The emphasis was on believable stories with emphasis on realistic characters entangled in webs of love, revenge, degradation and redemption. First-class cinematography and set design are often on a level with the work of Kurosawa, Ozu, and Mizoguchi.

In May of 1998 Phaedra Cinema, an indie distributor in Los Angeles, picked up two of the best that Nikkatsu had to offer from this decade that threatened to remain hidden in obscurity to American audiences. *When Wife To Be Sacrificed* and *A Woman Called Sada Abe* opened at the Roxie Theater in San Francisco, they did a tremendous box-office. Critics at the local newspapers knew they were reporting on something new and treated the subject with awe, surprise, and playful caution. Under the kittenish banner headline reading, "Erotic Japanese 'Woman' and 'Wife' BOUND to Be of Interest," Mick LaSalle at the *San Francisco Chronicle* states, "The films are not pornographic. Nonetheless, the protracted sex scenes, the kinkiness (involving ropes) and the unrelenting erotic atmosphere would easily qualify both for an NC-17 rating." He reviews both films individually, then sums the situation up by observing, "The nuances of the acting and the technical expertise of the film-making keep both movies from being merely lurid. At the same time, they're not for everybody. While almost qualifying as studies in psycho-erotic extremity, they do have the baser aim of hitting below the belt. How well they succeed is up to each viewer to decide."

Kelly Vance pulled out all the double-meaning stops in the enthusiastic review in the May 1 *San Francisco Express* by stating, "The difference between this and ordinary, salacious drive-in sleaze-o-rama is in Onuma's artful direction and the performance of Naomi Tani, who displays admirable restraint in the title role. If the two pics can rope in an audience, there are plenty more Japanese S/M pics with high production values waiting to be revived, according to Roxie manager Elliot Lavine."

Still keeping the films together as a double feature, the program played other major art-house venues, including the prestigious Facets Multimedia Center in Chicago. Reporting in the *Chicago Tribune*, critic Michael Wilmington looked further beyond the superficial than most when he observed that, "Because these popular softcore movies showed less, they had to suggest more, which is why some, including these two, can be unblushingly defended as film art. That doesn't mean they aren't deeply disturbing. Both are sexy, transgressive movies about erotic outlaws: people who go beyond the bounds of even unconventional morality." He felt *Sada Abe* to be the better of the two features, and summed up the column with the closing remark that, "...as relics of a more permis-

sive era—and a subtler Eastern approach to erotica—they can still tie you up and make you gasp."

The fan magazines started carrying the torch, and Ray Renalletta wrote a lengthy critique of *Wife* in issue 19 of *Asian Cult Cinema*, easily the most scholarly of the periodicals covering the Asian film scene. He debated the merits (and lack of merits) of *Wife*, but concluded the film is "...a groundbreaking film that rises above a simple geek-show mentality and presents its sado-masochistic theme in uncompromising terms, forcing the viewer to deal with the film on a rational, objective level, while at the same time reveling in its sheer, sexual outrageousness. According to Phaedra Cinema's Greg Hatanaka, the time is long overdue to introduce one of the most successful sub-genres of Nippon Cinema to U.S. fans of Asian Cinema looking for new horizons to explore. Now that Hong Kong Cinema seems to have ended its cult status here, the gates have opened for something new and unique."

Which is also very well and good, but also where the troubles of these films may begin. I spoke with Mr. Hatanaka, who claimed that it was difficult to educate audiences, critics and film bookers about this strange, new sub-genre. "It would be a lot easier to sell a package of giant Japanese monsters, since everyone has seen a *Godzilla* movie," Greg told me. "The Nikkatsu films are proving a tough sell indeed!"

Although the films played the major cities I've just cited, and will probably be playing in Seattle by the time this magazine sees publication, wider distribution is being hindered by not having a

major New York playdate. And, according to Hatanaka, no New York theater wanted to play the films until they saw how well they did in Los Angeles. And therein hangs a tale.

The films did play as a double feature at the Monica 4-Plex in Santa Monica, but the results were less than spectacular. At the advance press screening, I finally caught up with both films on the big screen for the first time. There was a sampling of reviewers from the Los Angeles area, including dailies, weeklies, and even a few Asian language newspapers. Twenty minutes into *Wife To Be Sacrificed*, critic Kevin Thomas of the *Los Angeles Times* got up with a sigh and walked out of the screening. According to Greg Hatanaka, he then received a call from the front office of Laemmle Theaters, who operate the Monica 4. The word was that Thomas was "disgusted by these films, and would not be reviewing them in his column." This panicked the sad-sisters at Laemmle, who dreamed up a dozen good excuses not to run the coming-attractions trailers for these films, or post the one-sheets for the films in the outside show-cases (even though they didn't mind hanging posters advertising *John Waters' Pecker* in loud, lurid primary colors). Laemmle cut the already skimpy one-week playdate short, but have no guilt about charging Hatanaka full-tilt for advertising and other expenses incurred.

The upshot is this. Kevin Thomas was disgusted by these films? Well, I was present for "these films" and saw Thomas walk out twenty minutes into the first one. So he got disgusted real quick and never came back. He got disgusted a lot easier by the second film, since he never came back

to see that one at all. Yet he lied to Laemmles, and perhaps to his employers at the *Los Angeles Times* who were paying him to be there, and claimed that he had seen the films and was disgusted. If his indifferent shirking of his duties in any way contributed to the exhibitors getting cold feet, pulling their punches in the advertising, not utilizing trailers and posters at all, and will ultimately hinder these films from gaining a wider American recognition, then we can stop thinking of Mr. Thomas as anything like a serious, credible, responsible reviewer. (Perhaps not a total loss. He was one of the few original thinkers in the world to give the American *Godzilla* film rave reviews the producers could quote in their ads.)

What will happen next? The films may be split up to run as midnighters, or may be paired with other Japanese films to be included in film festivals. Nikkatsu has sent a FAX filled with more titles they'd like him to book in America, but first he must try to break new ground by gaining recognition for the first two.

"I'm not going to give up," Greg told me. "These films are intense and hauntingly elegant, in fascinating wide screen, color photography unseen in most genres of filmmaking from any country. If we can get a word of mouth reputation going for these films, then the public will dictate whether we can import more, or whether it was a good idea at the wrong time!"

And as of this moment, that's where it stands! We'll have further information next issue. Who knows—if he's still speaking to us, maybe we'll have an interview with Kevin Thomas explaining why he got disgusted. Stay tuned for more. ■

CINEMATRIX RELEASING

NEW
HAUNTED



HAUNTED

(Director: DENNIS DEVINE)
In the tradition of "H Files" it mixes suspense, the supernatural and a touch of comedy. Features "erotic" star Yvette McLendon and "Press Your Luck" host Peter Tomarkin in his film debut.

NEW
VAMPIRE
TIME TRAVELERS



VAMPIRE TIME TRAVELERS

Time travel. Psycho-nerds. Flesh-eating globs. A sadistic sorority leader. Butts being bitten. All this and vampires, too. Features J.J. Rodgers (Sisters of Sin).



SORORITY HOUSE VAMPIRES

Lots of sorority girls get naked, bitten, spanked, paddled, hosed and kissed. Very campy. Stars Low Rider covergirl Raquel Maldonado.



THINGS II

Lots of monsters, gore and suspense from the creators of the original "THINGS." Creatures by Woody Varras. Series finale for creators Bowler, Devine, Jarvis.



AMAZON WARRIOR

(Director: DENNIS DEVINE) Packs in action, camp, T&A. Lots of outrageous stunts including Amazon who snaps heads between her legs. Features Playboy covergirl Christine Lydon ("Jackie Brown").



DECAY

Action-packed crime drama finds a sexy rich woman in trouble with a serial killer, a strip bar owner and the mob. Stars Robert Z'dar (Maniac Cop, Tango and Cash)



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Joyce Jameson Interview

by David DelValle

Anyone who ever saw Roger Corman's *Tales Of Terror* or Jacques Tourneur's *Comedy Of Terrors* will remember blonde comedienne, Joyce Jameson. Joyce held her own with genre greats Peter Lorre, Vincent Price, Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone. Her comedic gifts and timing added depth and humor to her portrayal of love-starved housewives and would-be opera divas. Joyce was also a veteran of over 100 television shows. She taught Herman Munster to rumba, Barney Fife to kiss in the dark, dated the *Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, as well as appearing on *The Love Boat*, *The Fall Guy*, *Barretta*, *Columbo* and *Barney Miller*. She was also a regular on *The Steve Allen Tonight Show*.

Joyce made her film debut in MGM's 1951 *Showboat* and went on to work in *The Apartment* and *Good Neighbor Sam*, both with Jack Lemmon, who hailed her as "the best comedienne in the business!" Clint Eastwood used her in both *Every Which Way But Loose* and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. She worked for Roger Corman once more in *Death Race 2000*. Joyce made a separate career out of voice-overs, doing dozens of cartoons and commercials.

This interview was conducted in my house in 1981 and was to be part of a book about the Roger Corman Poe films, to be called *Poe/Corman/Poe*. Joyce became a close friend from that first visit, and would attend parties and screenings with me throughout the '80's. Joyce had gained weight and would not consider movies again until she was trim and svelte, which sadly never came to pass. After a decade, my Corman book is ready to be printed, and this excerpt of Joyce's interview is for the first time being offered in *Cult Movies*.

Where you first introduced to Roger Corman as an actress?

Joyce Jameson: No, we were on a date. We knew nothing about each other. We were just people who dated and had dinner together and he was dating this blonde that he was using in a picture and I was dating Bob Campbell (one of Corman's

scriptwriters)... I remember the first night we all went out together, he was a very introverted man, as you know. He was not demonstrative in any way, and he was always so very quiet. I think the entire evening, which must have been four hours of sitting around eating dinner, he didn't open his mouth once. That was my first impression of Roger.

How were you cast for *Tales of Terror*?

J.J.: ...I came back from New York (where she was appearing in the Billy Barnes Review) to do *The Apartment* for Billy Wilder. Somewhere I guess, around that time Roger...called me, He was doing those Poe things, and he asked me to do

Tales Of Terror, and my first day on the set, the thing that I remember most was the set, of course, it was so unbelievable. That set was so marvelous.

The first thing I had to do was...we opened with Roger Corman directing me kissing Vincent Price. And I remember that... all of a sudden here's this very tall man and I'm only 5 foot 2. I had to kiss him, and they were going to shoot that scene first.

Where you introduced to Vincent Price for the first time here?

J.J.: Usually, you kiss first and then you get introduced. That's usually the way it happens, as I recall.

So you didn't rehearse the scene at all?

J.J.: As I recall, because we were working with Roger, we did not rehearse, contrary to working with Jacques Tourneur (on *Comedy Of Terrors*), when we did rehearse before each scene.

On the set, did they make many changes in the script, which was a combination of the Poe stories, "The Black Cat" and "The Cask Of Amontillado"?

J.J.: No, the end script that was delivered to me and which was the combination of the two stories, was not altered. We were of course allowed to ad-lib or improvise if something was good. I had come from that school of work.

You knew that you were going to be working with Vincent Price and Peter Lorre?

J.J.: I didn't know how they worked though, and I certainly was so terrified for myself, since this was one of the first things I had ever done and certainly the first leading role I had ever done in a movie.

Do you recall your first meeting with Peter Lorre?

J.J.: I don't even remember my first meeting with Peter Lorre. You see, I kept pretty much to myself on that picture. I was so frightened and so naive and so scared that I think I pretty much hid out in the dressing room.

How did Lorre and Price treat you on the set?

J.J.: Just fine.

Every shroud has a silver lining when good creeps get together!

THE COMEDY OF TERRORS
IN PANAVISION AND COLOR

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VINCENT PRICE • PETER LORRE • BORIS KARLOFF

WITH
JOYCE JAMESON • RHUBARB THE CAT

SPECIAL GUEST STARS
JOE BROWN • BASIL RATHBONE

Produced by JAMES H. NICHOLSON and SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF
Co-Producers ANTHONY CARRAS • JACQUES TOURNEUR
Directed by RICHARD MATHESON
Written by LES BAXTER
Music by

Were you in awe of them?

J.J.: Well, I was a big fan of both of theirs...but I was not overwhelmed to be working with them because in those days, you have to recall, they were thought of more as has-beens...They had not received the attention that they had received in the past. In other words, as far as Peter was concerned, his heyday was in the past at Warner Brothers, and Vincent was a washed up actor...So as far as I was concerned...I didn't think anything of it. I just went to work, and my leading men happened to be older than me.

Were Peter and Vincent very close on the set?

J.J.: I have no idea. Nobody seemed very close. It was called "Let's get the picture done fast". I think in between takes, we just all went off by ourselves. There was no camaraderie as I recall between me and those people...You know, *Tales Of Terror* was shot so quickly.

Well, the picture looks more expensive than it actually was to shoot.

J.J.: Well I can't imagine that anything could have been cheaper. Roger was famous for being cheap and if you decided to do a picture for Roger, why, you did it because, knowing in advance that you were doing it for the experience. Nobody ever thought for a second that these pictures were going to become cult or famous or anything. As far as I was concerned, I was a beginning, naive actress in terms of the movies. I had a stage background...and a TV background, but this was my first big movie.

Do you have any other memories of filming *Tales Of Terror*?

J.J.: The most memorable thing was when they walled us up at the end of the picture...it was the last shot of the movie...it was a scene where...the cat, when they (the police) finally take the blocks down, it meows, claws my head and jumps off, because it has been the meowing that has brought me down there to begin with.



There I was, walled up and they put the wall and we were forever hanging by those chains, my eyes were closed, the cat was on top of my head and they had assured me that they had de-clawed the cat and for a second I opened my eyes and I saw a nurse and a doctor dressed in white and the nurse was holding a long needle, and at that point I fainted dead away.

I couldn't believe it. I just thought, "Oh my God", I can't possibly do this. So Roger said, "Quick, revive her, put her up there again, we've got to get this shot fast before we lose Joyce com-

pletely", because I was not only fainted, I was in a state of terror. I was nearly as worried about the cat as I was about the damned needle that the nurse was holding.

I mean, to open your eyes and to have this cat on top of your head, a person standing behind the wall with a hole with the tail through, pulling the tail and Roger standing there with some food saying, "Come on, come on, kitty, let's get this shot, let's get the shot this time" and I open my eyes and I see these two people with the needle...well it was almost too much for me.

We worked on that shot at least the whole day, that very last shot in the picture, because the damned cat would not meow, do a claw and jump on cue.

Do you have any other comments about Roger Corman?

J.J.: Corman was a visionary, a person who could see a thing as it would be completed. That's why I regret he didn't do *Comedy Of Terrors*. He seemed to know that it was going to be better than—most of us look at a script and think of the actors, think of the words, instead of thinking, "How am I going to make this something really good" or "How are we all going to get together and make this thing better" and sometimes you can and sometimes you can't... In Roger's case, it was like, he knew in advance whatever he might see on paper was going to be better for the casting and for the fact that he would let people alone because he did do things quickly, because he didn't lay heavy on anything.

Roger underneath all of that commercial gloss and the fact that he is able to make money hand over fist, he never neglected getting, just like he got his actors, the scriptwriters who really had something more to say than what appeared on the surface and that was a big talent of his, obviously since all of these people have gone on to do other things. There are very few people who can sense out talent that early on.



(continued)



JOYCE JAMESON SKYROCKETS TO TOP FILM STARDOM WITH WORLD-FAMED TERROR FOUR

It's pretty frightening — literally and figuratively — to be the lone female star cast with such four giants of menace acting as Vincent Price, Peter Lorre, Boris Karloff and Basil Rathbone.

But vivacious Joyce Jameson is one actress who is not easily frightened, especially when such casting gives her the best opportunity she ever has had to show off her tremendous comedy and acting talents.

Joyce's big starring role with Price, Lorre, Karloff and Rathbone comes in American International's "The Comedy of Terrors" which opens at the Theatre. The color and Panavision comedy thriller also features Joe E. Brown as guest star.

An extra noteworthy touch for Joyce in "The Comedy of Terrors" is that fact that she provides the feminine foil for Peter Lorre's very first film romance after over thirty years on the screen. Joyce helps make it one of film's most memorable affairs, thanks her keen sense of comedy.

Born in Chicago, she moved with her family to Los Angeles when she was in her teens. The comely blonde graduated from Los Angeles High School and from the University of California (UCLA) where she majored in Theatre Arts.

Joyce's comedy talents mushroomed at the age of four when she started amusing her family with hilarious imitations of Mae West. Her favorite imitation shifted to Marilyn Monroe as she grew older and she parlayed it into one of her most popular stage and television bits.

It was during her UCLA days that she started her career via college musical revues and bit parts in motion picture musicals. It was at that time that romance blossomed with fellow student Billie Barnes, bright young musician and comedy writer with whom she teamed in comedy-satirical acts that he wrote.

Billy and Joyce were married a year or so after her graduation from college and they forthwith collaborated on writing a show. She wrote the book and he the music and lyrics for "Baby Face O'Flynn" which was presented at the famous Gallery Theatre in Los Angeles.

Subsequently the talented couple were divorced but they continue to collaborate professionally. "The Billy Barnes Revue" and "The Billy Barnes People," the former of which was first presented at a small Hollywood club, became big hits in the Los Angeles theatre world and later on Broadway in New York City.

It was Joyce's work in both these revues which brought her to nation-

wide attention and appearances in leading night clubs and on top television shows. She became a regular on the Steve Allen Show, then on Spike Jones' "Club Oasis" TV show.

Prior to making her starring dramatic debut in AIP's "Poe's Tales of Terror," she made film-goers sit up and take notice with her memorable bit role in Billy Wilder's "The Apartment." She also starred in "The Balcony" and soon will be featured in a comedy record album.

The blonde actress-comedienne lives with her eight-year-old son, Tyler. Also resident with Joyce and Tyler are a male apricot poodle named Tippecanoe (and Tyler, too) and two kittens.

Her preference in clothes are jeans and furs, with her food tastes running to frozen enchiladas prepared in a pre-heated oven. She reads extensively and manages to take over all household duties when necessary.

Joyce also is proud of her two wigs, which make for easy hair-dos, and regularly originates new diets in efforts to keep her weight down and shapely figure in trim.



JOYCE JAMESON co-stars with Vincent Price, Peter Lorre and Boris Karloff in American International's "The Comedy of Terrors." Joe E. Brown and Basil Rathbone are guest stars in the color and Panavision terror comedy, opening at the Theatre.

In 1964 AIP used you in *Comedy Of Terrors*. The shoot on that was a little bit longer.

J.J.: That was three weeks.

In this film, in addition to Lorre and Price, you also worked with Boris Karloff.

J.J.: Now Boris was ill, so the main thing you have to remember about Boris was that he was in a wheelchair and his wife was with him, so that most of the encounters that went on with Boris were done through his wife...they were both very sweet. My son was with me on that picture. He came every single day to that picture because he, naturally, wanted to meet Boris Karloff. And he was enthralled with him. Boris had a wonderful sense of humor and was terribly sweet.

Did you enjoy working with Rathbone, Lorre, Karloff and Price?

J.J.: I think some of the most delightful afternoons were spent on a big bed that was used for one of the scenes, I don't remember which, but we would all sit on the bed. Now, unfortunately,

Boris was not part of this because he was so sick, but it would usually be Basil and Vincent and myself...and sometimes Peter. Peter was actually the one who would be the impresario at lunchtime.

Those were the most exciting times of all, because Peter would then talk about being on the top ten hit list for Hitler, and how he came over here from Germany and all of his days at Warner Brothers. That was the most exciting part of doing that movie. You couldn't get enough of Peter. He just went on and on.

And then the afternoons were spent on this great, big bed with Vincent and Basil talking about their wonderful old friends, John Barrymore and Errol Flynn and this one and that one. Then Vincent and I became very friendly on that picture. Finally I was one of the group and it was a total education for me.

We heard that Lorre was ill and on drugs during the making of *Comedy Of Terrors*.

J.J.: I was aware that Peter went into his dressing room and I was told by somebody he went into his dressing room to take drugs. I also saw a box of something that I assume was the equipment of whatever it was that he used. I don't know what it was. I imagine it was heroin. I don't know what else. I know that when we finally got him together to do a scene, he was marvelous.

Did Peter Lorre's weight ever affect his work?

J.J.: Well, in *Tales Of Terror* Peter had a wonderful scene with the cat. The scene involved Peter staring at the cat on his lap. Except he was so fat the cat kept sliding off, because Peter had no lap to work with!!

Where there any particularly difficult scenes to shoot on *Comedy Of Terrors*?

J.J.: The scene where Basil Rathbone was about to hatchet me. Now what they told me was that the hatchet would be rubber and that there was nothing to worry about and they would shoot one scene of Basil holding it and then another scene

where the hatchet had to hit right next to my ear and so I said, "Would you mind if I felt the hatchet?" And I felt the hatchet and it was a real hatchet. So I immediately called my agent and said, "Do I have to do this?" because I'm really so petrified that it would be just my luck to move, because this is no rubber hatchet. Obviously, they can't have a hatchet going into the ground if it's a rubber hatchet. why did they even tell me such a silly thing?

So I said, "I can't do this, I'm petrified." and I'd never done anything temperamental like that, but I was really scared. So they went to a big meeting, you know, what are we going to do about this hatchet scene. Somebody came up and whispered to me, "You know they can shoot this backwards don't you? All you have to do is lie down and they pull the hatchet up and out. But it takes a separate studio and a separate day and more money."

I said, "You mean that's the reason I am going through this scene being terrified is because they're too cheap to shoot the scene backwards?" So finally I said, "I understand you can shoot this backwards" and they said, "Well, would you lie still for Basil Rathbone doing whatever he has to do?" And I said, "Yes, I will, as long as the actual thing with the hatchet, when the hatchet just misses and comes next to my ear, is done backwards." So we made an agreement on that.

And your fondest memories of the filming?

J.J.: This really great camaraderie that Peter and I had. We had established a wonderful rapport. We seemed to pick up on each other's way of working. Vincent, I think, can work with anybody and pretty much stay his same character, but Peter will pick up on what you are doing and play with it and play against it and for it and everything like that. We did so many wonderful scenes together



and I took great pleasure in every scene that I did with Peter.

What was your opinion of *Comedy Of Terrors* director Jacques Tourneur who had directed *I Walked With a Zombie* and *Curse of the Demon*?

J.J.: He was very fierce and dogmatic about the way he wanted scenes played in comparison to

Roger Corman, who let us do just about anything we wanted. I personally think that the freedom that Roger allowed us made it (*Tales Of Terror*) much more successful and much more interesting and allowed for the wonderful camaraderie that was displayed in the drinking sequence between Vincent and Peter or even in some of the cute little moments between Peter and myself.

I frankly, in spite of his reputation, did not think Jacques Tourneur was a good director, because to me a good director is someone who leaves you alone. You come to an agreement about what it is that you want to do and then you're left alone.

I felt, with the exception of the scenes with Peter, and some of the musical stuff and stuff with Boris...it seemed like the heavy hand of Jacques Tourneur along with the illness of Peter maybe gave the whole picture a feeling of heaviness. Even Vincent was over-acting in that, which he didn't do in *Tales Of Terror*. I personally didn't feel that Jaques Tourneur was the right person to direct that. I think that's one of the reasons that the picture failed, although it was also too progressive for the time.

I think that had Roger Corman directed *Comedy Of Terrors*, it would have been faster-paced, lighter, and would have dealt more in terms of present time acting.

In spite of many late night phone calls and morale-boosting visits, Joyce became more and more withdrawn and depressed. Several weeks would go by without a word from her, until finally on January 16, 1986, Joyce was found dead in her home. She was 55. Joyce was survived by her son, Tyler Barnes, whose father, Billy Barnes introduced Joyce to L.A. show biz society with the Billy Barnes Review. One of the last happy moments in Joyce's life was screening *Comedy Of Terrors* in my home for about fifty diehard fans on Halloween. She said "It made me feel like a star again." ■



Snoops and Scoops



FJA, Cult Movies' own Marta Dobrovitz and Brad Linaweaver during taping of the premiere episode of Cult Movies TV.

by Forrest J Ackerman

Forrest J Ackerman (hey, that's me!—little late to deny it after 82 years) has done his 55th cameo for a Canadian production, *Silent Invasion*, and #56 for America producers, *Scarlet Moon* (a vampire thriller) and #57 will be for a Swiss group, appearing with Angus (The Tall Man) Scrimm, famous scream queen Linnea Quigley and introducing Kimberly Peterson in a Dario Argento-type murder mystery titled *Killer By Frost*.

A TV crew spent from 9 am 'til 5 pm in the Ackermansion—and returned the next day for further shots!—for a feature inspired by *The Man of a Thousand Faces* entitled "The Mansion of a Thousand Faces." Special attention was focused on the Lon Chaney Memorial Room and the Karloff/Lugosi Memorial Room and Ackerman Anecdotes concerning Ray Bradbury, Vampirella, Geo Pal, Esperanto, Fritz Lang, Vincent Price and other sci-fi, fantasy & horror celebrities & situations that have not been done-to-death in previous Ackermansion & Ackermansion TV interviews over the years since 1948 (*Merv Griffin Show*, *To Tell the Truth*, *Down Memory Lane*, *Bill Cosby*, *Mike Douglas*, *The Tomorrow Show*, et al).

110 fans turned up to celebrate FJA's 82nd birthday including rock star Ogre (Skinny Puppy), Ann Robinson (*War of the Worlds*), Hillary Klein (*Transylvania Twist*), Eric Caidin, Curtis Harrington (*Queen of Blood*), sci-fi authors Jim Harmon, Chas. Nuetzel, Chas. Fritch, Len Moffatt, Brad Linaweaver, Stu Byrne and Victor Komans, Jim Wynorski (director, *Vampirella*), Vanessa Komans (*Teenage Witch*), Vincent Sherman (director of *Bogie in The Return of Dr. X*), Kenneth (Hollywood Babylon) Anger, Ron (grandson of Lon Jr.) Chaney, two imagi-movie fan/pro's from Holland, friend of Brother Theodore Jeffrey Roberts, Gerfan Ingrid Herzer, Ron (Transylvania Twist)

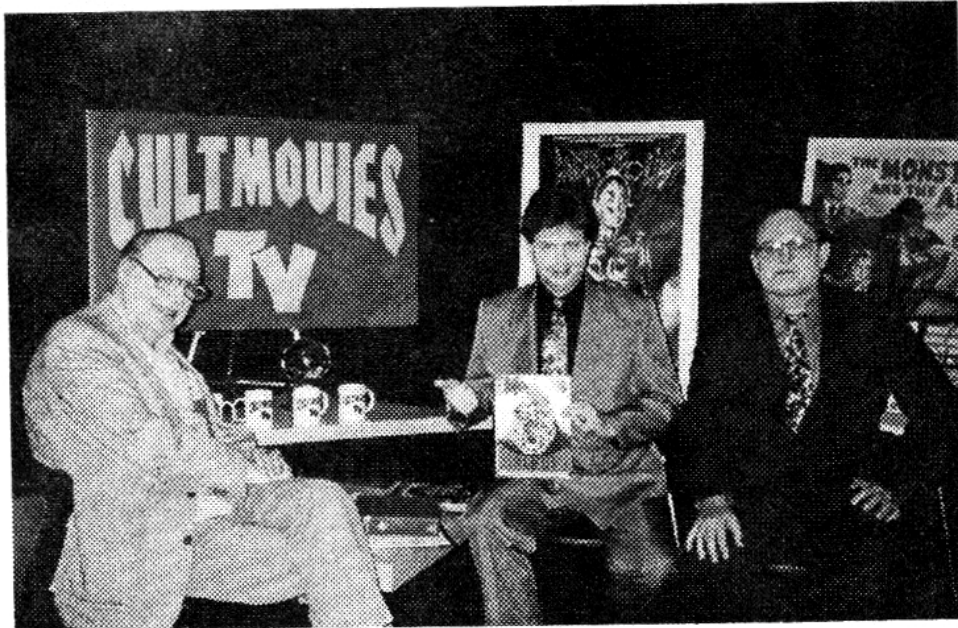
Borst, Kevin J. Burns (mastermind of the fabulous TV shockumentaries on Karloff, Lugosi, the Chaney and imagi-movies thru lustrums from silents thru talkies), Jessie Lilley (originally of *Scarlet Street*), Nikolas & Zeena Schreck, Mike (himself) Copner, actress Francine York and scores more. FJA received a fabulous framed *Mysterious Island* (1929) poster from Ron Borst, a Lon Chaney *Unholy Three* poster from Ken Anger, a half dozen blank videocassettes from the van Vogts, an original painting from Anthony Brzezinski, a fantastic

films book from the founder of the Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films Dr. Donald A. Reed and a pyramid of other presents, most of them fantasy related.

Walter Chinwell reports seeing Bela Lugosi Jr. & FJA as Ghosts of Horror at the Los Angeles premiere of the girl trio of rock stars known as the Famous Monsters. The leader of the group told Forry, "Our name is a tribute to the 190 issues of *Famous Monsters* you edited and James Warren published that we grew up on between 1958 & 1971." Chinwell also spotted Ron Borst at the Playboy mansion at Hugh Hefner's legendary annual Xmas party. (Hef himself is an imagi-movie fan from way back, once even created his own fanzine, copies of which are now owned by Borst.)

Classic Science Fiction Stories that Morphed into Famous Movies, my latest book, should be on sale all over the country by the time this column sees print.

Fans interested in meeting me will find me in 1999 in Chicago, Pittsburgh, San Diego, Ft. Lauderdale, Melbourne/Australia, Minneapolis, Crystal City/VA, Atlanta, the Twin Cities and Rastatt/Germany (as Guest of Honor at the Convention celebrating the publication of the futuristic 2000th weekly space-time PERRY RHODAN novel, of which I edited 137 translations by Wendayne Ackerman, Sig Wahrman, Stuart J. Byrne and Dwight Decker in the USA). Check Marscon, CONvergence, Dragoncon, ComicCon, Summer of Horrors, Monster Bash, Archon, Chillercon/Fanex fantasy film festival, Rhodancon, World SF Con in Science Fiction Chronicle for details of my SF congoing. Unfortunately if I want to make it to my 100th birthday, doctor's orders are to curtail my SF Ackivities. But Cameron SilverScreen leaked it that JAMES WARREN has a super surprise up his sleeve that may involve Terry Moore, Ray Harryhausen, John Landis, Ann Robinson, Ron Chaney, Zacherley, Ray Bradbury, Rick Baker, Robert Wise, Forrest J Ackerman & Others in the pre-2000 stellar event. Watch this feature in *Cult Movies* for further flashes. ■



FJA helped make the inaugural episode of Cult Movies TV a big success. Here he is being interviewed by Mike Copner and Buddy Barnett.

Christopher Lee

Ray Harryhausen

Harlan Ellison

Michael Ripper

Jane Adams

Elena Verdugo

Anne Francis

Coleen Gray

Ed Kemmer

Rex Reason

Yvette Vickers

Veronica Carlson

Ingrid Pitt

Yutte Stensgaard

Ron Chaney

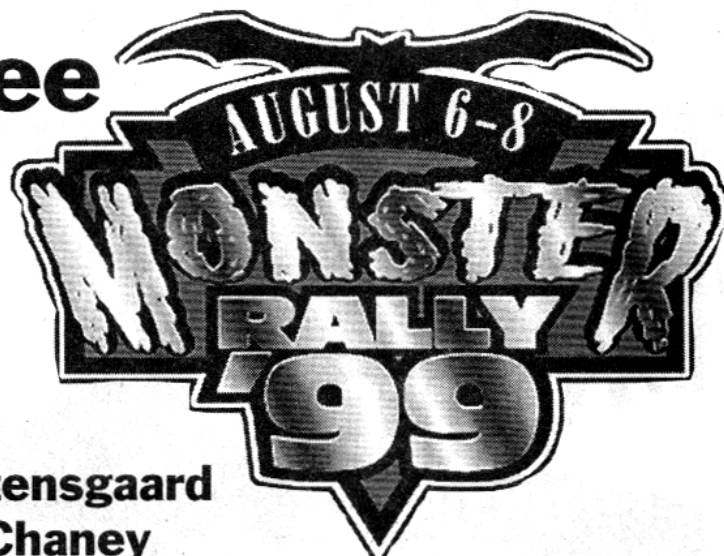
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Realart

Remembered

Special article by
Scott MacGillivray
 and **Ted Okuda**

In the days before television, a number of entrepreneurial producers and salesmen, working in the "small time" of the motion picture industry, would buy up older pictures, dust them off, and solicit bookings in the nation's neighborhood the-

aters. But selling the public on something it had already seen required creative marketing and many of these companies, such as Astor Pictures, Film Classics, Favorite Films and a host of others, are remembered today for their reissue promo-

tions. One company, however, stands out as the most ambitious, and busiest, reissue specialist of the group: Realart.

Realart Pictures began operations in 1948 when its officers—Jack Broder, a shrewd film distributor, and his partner Joseph Harris—secured the theatrical rights to the Universal Pictures library. (The company was no relation to the silent-era Realart, which was the brand name of Paramount's lower-grade product.) It may seem incredible that an important studio would willingly surrender such a valuable commodity, but this was before television, the films had seen their day, and Universal had just merged into Universal-International and was divesting itself of many of its former assets—contract players, "B" pictures and serials among them. Realart's acquisition of the film library was part of Universal's housecleaning process and a great stroke of luck for Broder and Harris.

One of the first decisions that the two men made was to hire industry veteran Budd Rogers to head their sales department. Rogers had served on the executive boards of World Wide Pictures and Liberty Pictures in the 1930s, and became sales manager when Liberty was absorbed by Republic. By the time Rogers joined Realart, he was established as an eastern representative of Hollywood producers. Rogers would have a lot to work with.

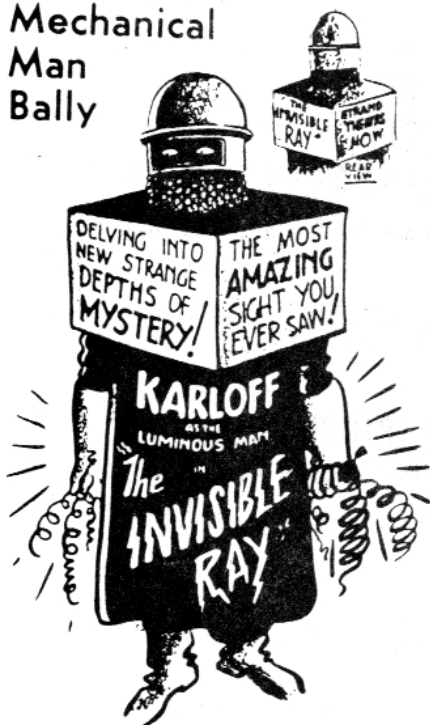
According to a history of Universal studios, the Broder-Harris deal granted them the use of much of Universal's 1933-1943 output for a period of ten years. In fact, however, Realart had access to the entire vault of Universal talkies dating from 1930 to 1946, and circulated them theatrically from 1948 to 1957.

The early Realart reissues were not sold as such. The advertising implied that the films were NEW; poster art read, "A Realart Picture" or "Released thru Realart Pictures." This practice was later modified in the interest of fair advertising, and promotions soon proclaimed the pictures "A Realart Re-Release."

Timing is everything and one of the key reasons for Realart's success was that it entered the reissue field at precisely the right moment. Exhibitors were disenchanted with the high cost and low quality of current releases, and many would resort to booking older and cheaper reels instead. Realart had a solid, impressive product line—major studio productions with big-name stars. This clearly gave Realart an edge over their competition because other distributors had to settle for grab bags of obscure or independently produced films. The public flocked to Realart revivals, and suddenly these "greatest hits" were in big demand. And as Realart prospered, so did its distribution network, and dozens of regional exchanges signed franchise agreements to handle Realart products.

Broder and Harris also understood the importance of creative marketing. Unlike many of their competitors, Realart's advertising artwork was unusually attractive. Most reissues were publicized very cheaply, with a limited selection of posters and accessories; the largest available poster was usually a 27 x 41-inch one-sheet, which was often printed in just one or two colors. Realart, however, went all-out with full-color poster accessories. (For their reissue of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Realart offered posters as large as an 81 x 81-inch six-sheet.) This is why Realart is the only reissue firm whose posters are as prized by

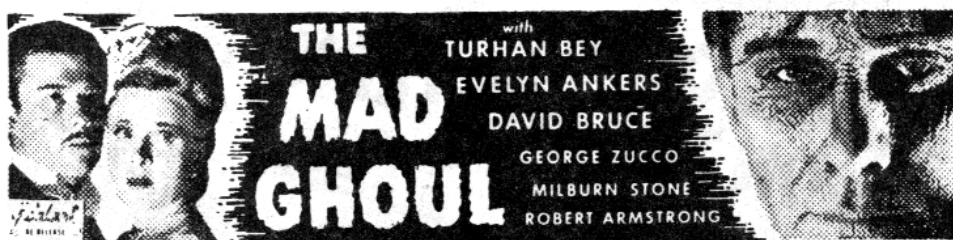
Mechanical Man Bally



This street bally can be easily made and should prove a good attention attracter. Take a large corrugated cardboard box and reinforce the inside with gum tape. Make a hole in the bottom so that it can be placed over a man's head and rested on his shoulders. Paint box a bright aluminum. Make helmet out of a large aluminum pot minus the handle and hang metal mesh cloth around the rim so that it covers man's face but still enables him to see. Put a flashlight in each hand and cover them with extra large light cotton gloves. Have him turn lights on and off, thus making his hands seem to glow. Place baling on all four sides of box and on front of black skirt as indicated in drawing.

collectors as the earlier "first editions." In a few cases, the new accessories were almost exact replicas of the originals (with only the Universal logo displaced in favor of Realart's). Otherwise, the lobby displays employed different, eye-catching graphics—even if they did play fast and loose with the material. For example, the 1942 Dead End Kids melodrama *Tough As They Come* was reissued by Realart in 1950—using poster art from *Call a Messenger*, a 1939 Dead End epic (which is why Buster Crabbe, who is not in *Tough As They Come*, is illustrated on the Realart sheet!)

Another aggressive marketing tool employed by Realart involved the actual titles of their releases. If an old picture had a mild, antiquated or cryptic title, Realart gave it an extra push by substituting a new, hard-sell tag. *Law and Order* (1932) was too tame for a blood-and-thunder western, so the film was renamed *Guns A-Blazin'*. *The Impostor* (1944) was transformed into the more forceful *Bayonet Charge*, and *We've Never Been Licked* (1943) became the more straightforward *Fighting Command*. Two problem titles had "mild" stamped all over them, and Realart dutifully toughened them up: *The Strange Affair of Uncle Harry* (1945)



became *Guilty of Murder?*, and *Ladies Courageous* (1944) emerged as—of all things—*Fury in the Sky*.

Sometimes things got even more complicated. Universal had made two chillers with the same title (*The Black Cat*), and Realart inherited them both. Not wishing to confuse things even more, the more recent 1941 version went out intact, while the 1934 version with Karloff and Lugosi was retitled *The Vanishing Body*.

Once in a while the original title would be too dated for modern consumption. *Hi-Ya, Chum* didn't make much sense in 1943, and was even less relevant in 1952 when Realart got hold of it. Strangely, the new title was just as meaningless: *Strait-Jackets!* Realart, however, did come up with a beautiful advertising display: a photo of The Ritz Brothers as classical dancers, with the caption "A Ballet-Full of Laughs!"

See My Lawyer (1945) was the film version of an early '40s Broadway play, which didn't mean much in the '50s, so Realart wanted a new title. One wonders if customers were attracted by the updated title: *In a Padded Cell*. This Olsen & Johnson comedy played on a zany double-bill with *Strait-Jackets!* and is a good example of a clever packaging idea which Realart used extensively. Budd Rogers and his staff would comb the vaults for two old pictures sharing the same theme, and offer them together as a double-barreled reissue attraction. Thus two Bing Crosby features played in tandem—*East Side of Heaven* and *If I Had My Way*—as did two horror movies—*House of Dracula* and *House of Frankenstein*—and two waterfront mellers *River Gang* and *San Francisco Docks*.

In a more creative mode, Realart came up with

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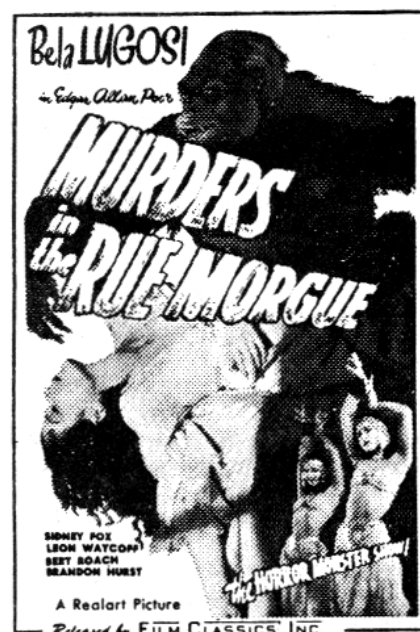


MR. EXHIBITOR

YOU NEED

THE PICTURE EVERY
MAN, WOMAN AND
CHILD WILL WANT
TO SEE.

Distribution Thru
REALART Franchise Holders
Everywhere



some novel "one-two punch" combinations. *Nagana* (1933) was paired with *The Big Cage* (1933) for an "all-wild-animal" show, while *The Spirit of Culver* (1939) was booked with *The Spirit of Notre Dame* (1931) for an "all-collegiate" show. And *Phantom of the Opera* (1943), together with *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1944), comprised a very successful "all-Technicolor" show. So extensive was the Realart backlog—to say nothing of the endless mix-and-match possibilities—that the company was able to reissue a new ready-made twin-bill on the average of every two weeks!

The studio logo on a picture presented no problem for Realart, although it has created some confusion over the years. Realart simply spliced in

their own company name in place of Universal's (usually on the actual prints, not on the negative), and left the rest of the original titles alone, but there were exceptions. The 1948 revival of *Buck Privates* (1941) used a very clever optical effect: a movie audience watches newsreel footage which dissolves to the Realart legend. This "fake" is so convincing that today's audiences may conclude that Realart originally produced the picture. *Hellzapoppin'* (1941) had a pre-credits prologue featuring Shemp Howard as the projectionist of the "Universal Theatre;" rather than doctor the footage, Realart found it easier to remove it altogether.

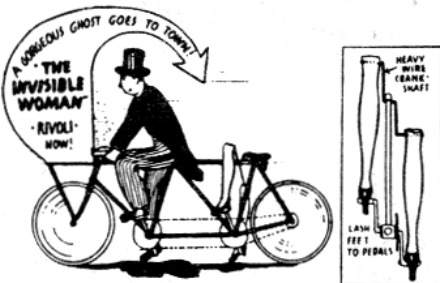
Interestingly enough, there was sometimes even

cooperation between Realart and its competitors. Another reissue company, Film Classics, had also revived certain vintage Universal titles, and on occasion an especially potent box-office attraction would be shared by Film Classics and Realart. Walter Wanger's Technicolor fantasy *Arabian Nights* (1942) and a perennial thrill-bill, *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) and *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), made the reissue rounds when Realart furnished the films and Film Classics handled the distribution and promotion.

The diversity of Realart's library also helped to make it a success, but in one case there was an unusual backlash. In addition to the horror films, the Abbott & Costello reissues were among

LAUGH PROVOKING STREET BALLY

Here's a laugh-getter that will really start them talking about "The Invisible Woman!" A tandem bicycle with an "invisible" woman riding on the rear seat! Those torso-less legs mysteriously pumping up and down are simply a pair of dummy legs such as those used in hosiery displays. Put shoes and stockings on them, lash the feet to the pedals, and fasten "knees" to a heavy wire crankshaft which is fastened to bicycle frame. Crankshaft will allow "knees" to duplicate the movement of the pedals below. Carry copy as indicated on compo-board sign attached to front of bike.



GOOD CO-OP ANGLE

Some clever co-op displays can be arranged with local merchants handling automatically or remotely controlled products. Such items as automatic phonographs, remote controlled radios, automatic heaters, stoves with clock controls, etc., will prove perfectly apropos. Use tie-in lines such as: "Let an 'Invisible Woman' work for you!" "You'll think you hired an 'Invisible Woman' when you use . . . !" "Let this 'Invisible Woman' end household drudgery!" Idea, of course, is to feature the automatic mechanics of the various products on display.



Realart's most profitable offerings. These reissues had an unintentionally negative effect on the current A&C product. Bud and Lou's earlier, superior efforts like *Buck Privates*, *Ride 'Em Cowboy* (1942), and *Who Done It?* (1942) were now competing with their first-run releases of the early 1950s—*Comin' Round the Mountain*, *Lost in Alaska*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*—and made these new entries seem even more mediocre than they already were.

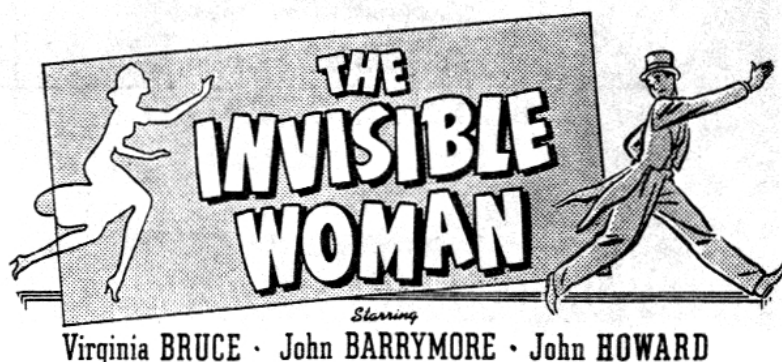
In the case of *One Night in the Tropics* (1940), Realart reaped the benefits from the passage of time. *Tropics* marked Abbott & Costello's first screen appearance; as the token comedy relief, they were billed below Allan Jones and Nancy Kelly in the credits. Their likenesses were no-

where to be found on most of Universal's publicity material because at the time they weren't yet a proven box-office draw. When Realart reissued the film in 1950, the "official" billing remained unchanged, but the ads implied that the film was a full-fledged Abbott & Costello comedy ("Abbott & Costello are at it again!"), with their pictures plastered all over the advertising art. Since the comedians' roles had originally been supporting ones, Realart cut the film down from 83 minutes to a brisk 69 minutes, giving Bud and Lou proportionately more footage. It didn't seem to matter to anyone at Realart that this ruthless editing rendered the main love-triangle plot incomprehensible. (Subsequent TV prints were taken from the

edited Realart material; the complete 83-minute version of *One Night in the Tropics* is now available on video.)

One Realart title had to be withdrawn shortly after its reissue. In 1953 Realart offered *The Missing Head*, which was originally *Strange Confession* (1945), the final entry in Universal's "Inner Sanctum" series (all entries starred Lon Chaney). Due to a plagiarism suit, *Strange Confession* had been pulled from distribution not long after its initial release. Perhaps no one at Universal informed the folks at Realart about this legal hassle, or maybe it was surmised that no one would notice the old film under a new title. Whatever the circumstances,

(continued)





The Missing Head was double-billed with *The Vanishing Body* (the rechristened version of *The Black Cat* [1934]), only to be yanked after only a few playdates. (Fortunately, the long-unavailable *Strange Confession* was released on video in 1997.)

Another Lon Chaney thriller, *Man Made Monster* (1941), was given a new lease on life in 1953 as *The Atomic Monster*, a title change that did not go unnoticed by one member of the public. Alex Gordon, then an aspiring movie producer, had taken a script titled *The Atomic Monster* (written by Gordon and Edward D. Wood, Jr.) to Broder in the hope of getting it produced as a vehicle for Bela Lugosi. Broder rejected the script but snatched the title, without Gordon's approval or knowledge,

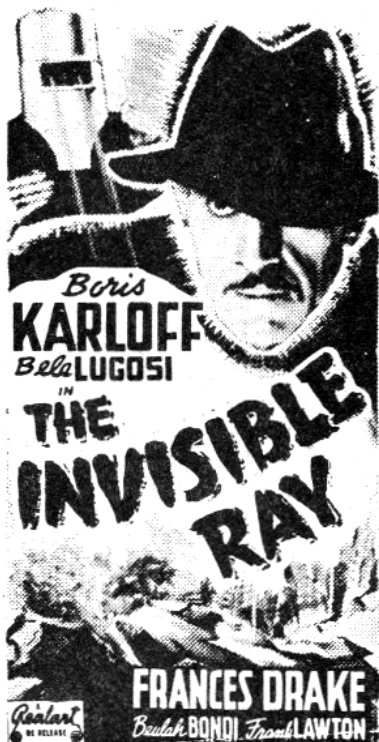
for the *Man Made Monster* reissue. Gordon and his lawyer, Samuel Z. Arkoff, returned to Broder's office and, after some legal maneuvering on Arkoff's part, reached a \$500 settlement. More importantly, however, it turned out to be Arkoff's first encounter with Realart's general sales manager, James H. Nicholson. Arkoff, Nicholson and Gordon would be key players in the formation of American International Pictures. As for the *Atomic Monster* script, Ed Wood later filmed it himself under the title *Bride of the Monster* (1956) starring Bela Lugosi.

Broder would still get his chance at film production. In 1950 the company had taken over the releasing arrangements for Ron Ormond's series

of Lash LaRue westerns. Since new pictures commanded higher rentals than reissues, Realart pursued the prospects of motion picture production. A slate of exploitation quickies was hastily assembled in 1951-52 by executive producer Jack Broder and associate producer Herman Cohen, renting soundstages at the all-purpose General Service Studios in Hollywood. Most of the films were dramatic potboilers. In *Kid Monk Baroni* (1952), an up-and-coming boxer undergoes plastic surgery, then falters in the ring when he concentrates more on shielding his new face than throwing punches at his opponents. A young Leonard Nimoy plays Baroni "before" and Richard Rober is the pugilist "after." *Two Dollar Bettor* (1951), a



Boris Karloff, star of Realart's pseudo-scientific thriller, "The Invisible Ray."



FEW motion pictures of the current season have proven so genuinely interesting as "The Invisible Ray," the Realart drama which opened an engagement of days at the theatre yesterday.

Karloff and Bela Lugosi, two of the screen's most sinister individuals, are co-starred in this unusual screenplay, and are the focal points of a story in which they are bitter enemies. Both are scientists, but Karloff has struck out into unexplored fields; and before the camera are seen a number of his advanced experiments which are literally awe-inspiring and startlingly picturesque. Never before has the screen shown such spectacular accomplishments in the scientific world, and all are filled with intense interest.

In the great glass dome of his laboratory Karloff produces an actual reproduction of the swirling suns and stars of the heavenly nebula Andromeda, exactly as they appeared millions of years ago. Later in the story he discovers the new element which he names Radium X, a thousand times more powerful than radium, and which he uses with deadly effect against his enemies. The climax of the story is literally hair-raising.

Others in the cast of this strange story who do good work are Frances Drake, Frank Lawton, Beulah Bondi, Walter Kingsford and Violet Kemble Cooper, while a large share of the credit for a most unusual picture must be given to Director Lambert Hillyer. From a production standpoint the film is unusual, and impressive backgrounds are shown successively in the Carpathian Mountains, in Africa and in Paris. The screenplay was produced by Edmund Grainger after an original story by Howard Higgin and Douglas Hodges, with screenplay by John Colton.

"The Invisible Ray" will interest you and thrill you mightily. We unhesitatingly recommended it as a picture which you will enjoy.



treatise on gambling, is bolstered by a moving performance by veteran actor John Littel as an honest bank employee who gets hooked on horseraces, and resorts to stealing bank funds in a desperate attempt to recoup his losses. Nominal leads Steve Brodie and Marie Windsor take a back seat to the third-billed Littel, who walks away with the acting honors.

Broder also fashioned such lurid exotica as *Bride of the Gorilla* (1951), a jungle melodrama written and directed by Curt Siodmak, and starring Barbara Payton (who was seen more regularly in the tabloids of the day than on the screen) and reliable character players Lon Chaney, Raymond Burr and Tom Conway. The setting is a

South American rubber plantation where the manager (Raymond Burr) is responsible for the death of the owner (Paul Cavanagh). Burr marries his boss's sultry young widow (Barbara Payton), but not before a faithful servant (Giselle Werbisek) places a voodoo curse on him. As a result, Burr becomes possessed with the instincts and uncontrollable desires of a wild gorilla. It's a ludicrous tale, yet within the limitations of its low budget, the film is surprisingly entertaining.

Broder's most famous (or infamous) production is *Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla* (1952), which shrewdly cashed in on the recent success (and standing sets) of *Bride of the Gorilla*, as well as the current popularity of comedy teams. The cast

and crew had plenty of experience with comedy teams: the juvenile leads, Duke Mitchell and Sammy Petrillo, specialized in impersonating Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, while the director (William Beaudine) and the script writer (Tim Ryan) were veterans of the "Bowery Boys" series. The ingenue (Charlita) was recruited from the cast of *The Bowery Boys' Let's Go Navy* (Monogram, 1951), and the photographer (Charles Van Enger) and editor (Philip Cahn) often worked with Abbott & Costello.

Mitchell & Petrillo play nightclub entertainers who find themselves on a remote tropical island where mad scientist Bela Lugosi is conducting

(continued)

IT'S THE BATTLE OF THE SEXES AS SAVAGE PLANET WOMEN ATTACK FEMALE SPACE INVADERS!!

ALL NEW and IN COLOR
Released by REALART Pictures

WOMEN OF THE PREHISTORIC PLANET



ALL
NEW
IN DE LUXE
COLOR

Starring
WENDELL COREY
KEITH LARSEN
JOHN AGAR
PAUL GILBERT
MERRY ANDERS
IRENE TSU

SEE:

GIGANTIC
TARANTULAS
EAT
MEN
ALIVE!



SEE: MEN SWALLOWED
IN TREACHEROUS PLANET
POOLS OF ACID!



SEE:

HUMANS
PRESERVED
IN HUGE
ICE
TOMBS!



SEE:

PREHISTORIC
NYMPHS BATHE
IN THE
POOLS OF
PARADISE!



Produced by GEORGE EDWARDS
Written and Directed by
ARTHUR PIERCE

experiments in evolution. Lugosi receives Petrillo with astonished rapture ("What an interesting cranium!") while Petrillo makes unsavory references to Lugosi's fiendish screen persona ("Look out for bats!"). Eventually, Lugosi transforms Mitchell into a gorilla—or to be more accurate, a "Brooklyn gorilla."

The film is basically a satire of jungle movies, with plenty of wheezy puns and obvious jokes, but Realart sold it as a comedy-horror film. Seventeen-year-old Sammy Petrillo's mimicry of Jerry Lewis is convincing (and, in some shots, uncanny). Duke Mitchell, at age 25, is perhaps more reminiscent of Tony Curtis than Dean Martin, but he fills his straight-man role adequately. The film was cheaply but efficiently made, and Broder scored a publicity coup by holding a "world premiere" in Brooklyn, New York to honor local boys Mitchell and Petrillo. (Broder reissued the film in 1954 as *The Boys from Brooklyn*.)

The real boys from Brooklyn, unfortunately, were unable to follow up their success. Jerry Lewis resented their act and tried to sue them—until Mitchell pointed out that he and Petrillo used their true names and faces, whereas Martin and Lewis used professional pseudonyms and Martin had undergone plastic surgery. So Martin & Lewis could, in effect, be accused of imitating Mitchell & Petrillo! M&L's studio (Paramount) backed down quickly and the suit was dropped, but Jerry saw to it that Duke and Sammy would not be hired for

other assignments. As a one-shot novelty, *Brooklyn Gorilla* has nothing to be ashamed of, apart from the outrageously unwieldy title.

Broder's brief flurry of original production came to an end in late 1952 with the Lex Barker-Lon Chaney western *Battles of Chief Pontiac*. As with *Brooklyn Gorilla*, the film boasted an expert technical crew (including cameraman Van Enger and editor Cahn). Oddly enough, the "Realart Pictures" is nowhere to be found on the Broder posters; perhaps Broder planned to release the films personally if the Realart organization was dissolved. As it happened, Broder retained the "Realart" name for the rest of his career.

The fortunes of the reissue specialists fell sharply with the rise of television. Several firms phased out their theatrical enterprises and sold their inventories to TV, which was not yet serviced by major studio film libraries. Realart wasted no time in giving its own productions TV exposure; *Bela Lugosi Meets a Brooklyn Gorilla* made its video bow about a year after its theatrical payoff.

But the well had begun to run dry. By 1954 Realart was reissuing its own reissues; in 1956 Realart even offered a twin-bill reissue of two Universal-International productions, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* and *Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff*. (Realart also reissued an occasional non-Universal film, like *The Fighting Sullivans*, a retitled version of *The Sullivans* [1944].)

Realart's contract with Universal wrapped up

at the beginning of 1957, and soon after the highly-prized Universal features went back to the vaults. (They were subsequently sold to Screen Gems, Columbia Pictures' TV outlet.)

Realart resurfaced in the 1960s for a last theatrical fling—and, true to form, offering a double feature. In 1966 *The Navy Vs. the Night Monsters*, a horror thriller featuring Mamie Van Doren, was packaged with *Women of the Prehistoric Planet*, an outer space opus with Wendell Corey and John Agar. But Realart acted only as distributor; *Night Monsters* was produced under the auspices of The Standard Club of America—a company owned and operated by Jack Broder.

With the Universal reels gone, Realart had to sustain itself on its homegrown product. Broder made the films available to anyone who wanted them for theaters, TV, or non-theatrical markets, and he occasionally tacked new titles onto the old prints. Broder maintained a distribution office and Realart remained alive, at least on paper, into the 1970s.

In a marketplace where the word "reissue" was tainted with poison, it is interesting to note that a film company was able to survive—and even thrive—on the repeated circulation of old merchandise. The key ingredient to this kind of success was showmanship—and Realart Pictures had it to spare.

(Special thanks to Eric Spilker and Richard Gordon for providing additional information on Realart.) ■

SHOCKING VIDEOS

HORROR!

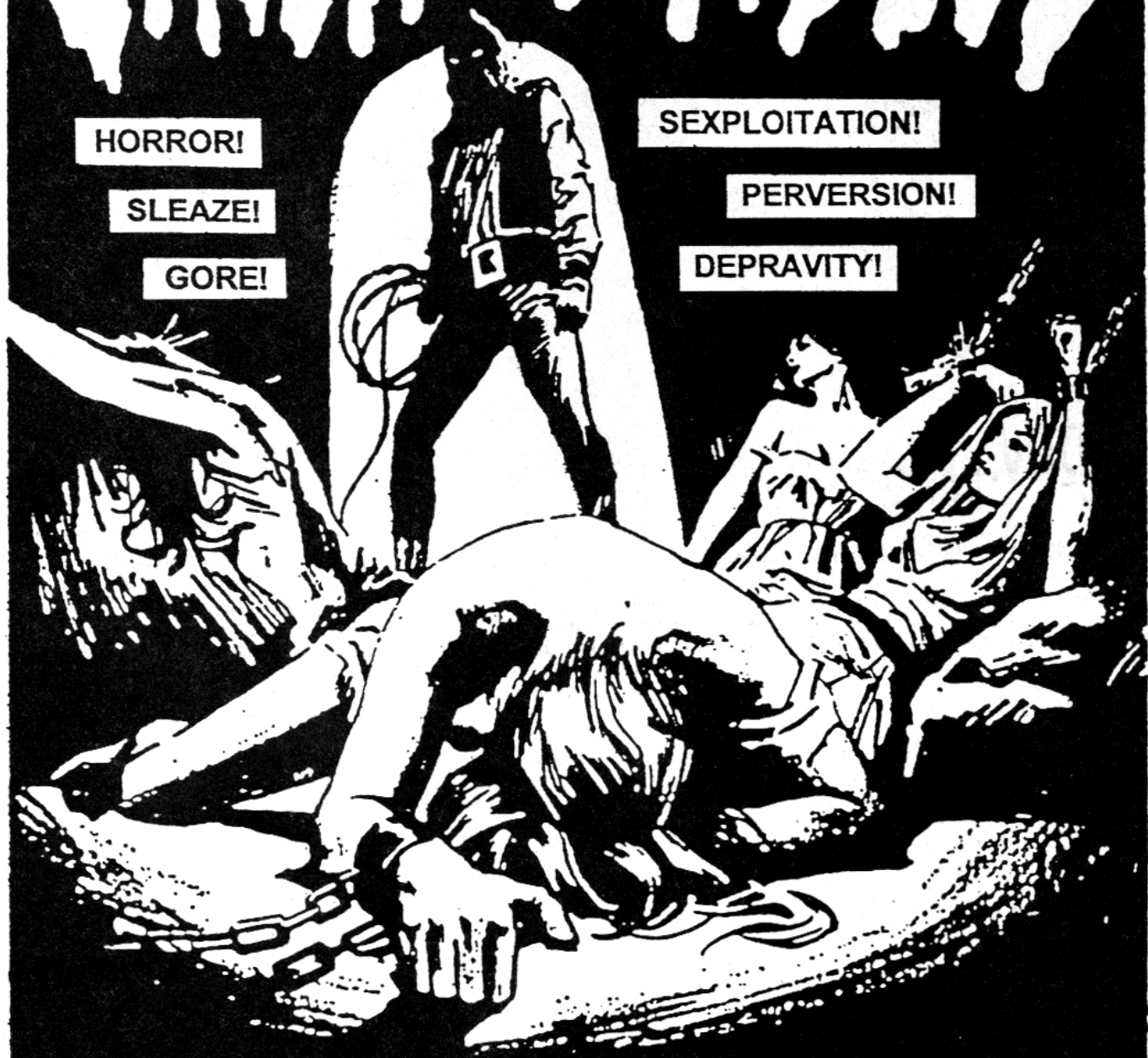
SLEAZE!

GORE!

SEXPLOITATION!

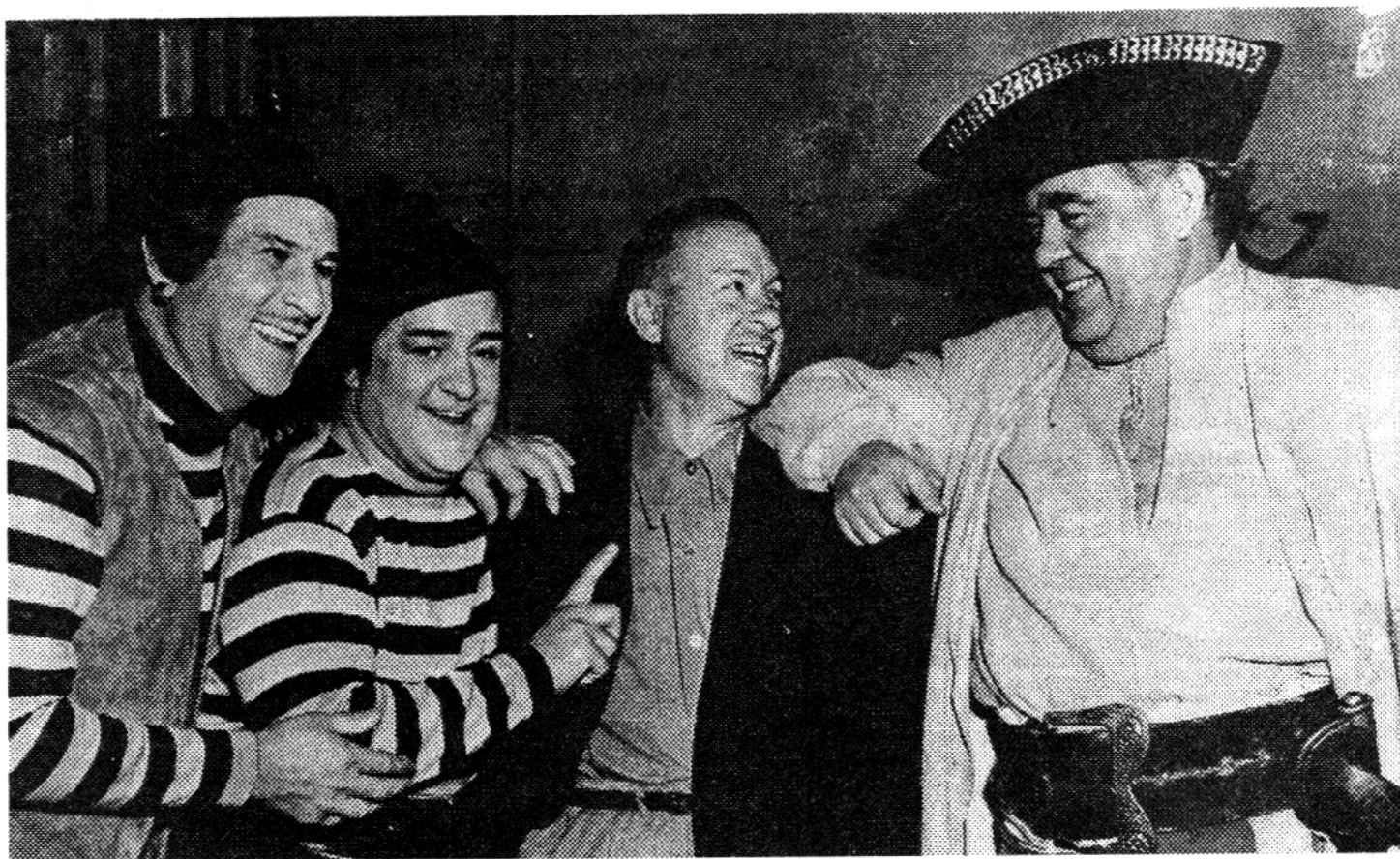
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Charles Lamont Remembers Abbott & Costello



Bud Abbott, Lou Costello, Charles Lamont and Charles Laughton on the set of *Abbott & Costello Meet Captain Kidd*.

Interview by Ted Okuda

Although Charles Lamont's career as a film director covered a variety of genres—musicals, Westerns, melodramas, and costume epics—he's best remembered for his comedies, particularly the nine movies he did with Abbott and Costello: *Hit The Ice* (1943), *Abbott and Costello In The Foreign Legion* (1950), *A&C Meet The Invisible Man* (1951), *Comin' Round The Mountain* (1951), *A&C Meet Captain Kidd* (1952), *A&C Go To Mars* (1953), *A&C Meet Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* (1953), *A&C Meet The Keystone Kops* (1955), and *A&C Meet The Mummy* (1955).

Born in 1895 (not 1898 as stated in studio biographies), Lamont came from a family of circus performers: an acrobatic act called "The Flying Lamonts, the Greatest Wire Act in the World." After serving in the Navy during World War I, he decided to head to California and try his luck in the movie business. He found work at Universal (then known as IMP) as an actor and stuntman, and worked his way up through every phase of the industry—prop man, electrician, editor, gag writer—until he reached his goal as a full-fledged motion picture director.

He directed a number of comedy shorts for producer Mack Sennett. With the coming of talking pictures, he continued to write and direct comedies, working with such talents as Shirley Temple, Buster Keaton, Harry Langdon, and The Three Stooges.

Lamont's opportunity to direct feature films came in 1934; by the time he retired in the late 1950s, he directed over 80 movies. During his years at Universal, his credits included *Mister Big* (1943), *The Merry Monahans* (1944; Lamont's personal favorite of all his films), *Ma And Pa Kettle* (1949), *Ma And Pa Kettle At Home* (1954), and *Francis In The Haunted House* (1956).

After a short stint at the Walt Disney Studios, where he directed TV episodes of *Zorro* with Guy Williams and *Annette* with Annette Funicello, Lamont retired. His final years were happy ones, spent with his wife Estelle Bradley, a former Miss Atlanta who starred in silent comedies. Charles Lamont Passed away on September 12, 1993.

The following has been edited from interviews conducted in 1981 and 1983:

Cult Movies: How did your association with Abbott and Costello begin?

Charles Lamont: I was under contract to Universal at the time. One of my pictures, the title of which I can't recall [perhaps *Melody Lane*, *Don't Get Personal* or *You're Telling Me*] was playing the bottom half of a double bill at the Pantages Theater. Abbott and Costello's *Ride 'Em Cowboy* (1942) was the main attraction. Bud and Lou came to the theater one night with their families and to their surprise, my picture got ten times as many laughs as their film did. They were furious and went back to the studio screaming, "Who the hell is this guy

Charles Lamont? He makes a little situation comedy and gets all the laughs. We get nothing! Why can't we get a director like him?"

Fred Kelly of the production department explained to me what had happened and said, "Abbott and Costello want you to direct their next picture." But I didn't want to. I knew that if I directed them I'd be considered an Abbott-and-Costello-type director. All I'd ever get to make would be those kinds of slapstick comedies. Universal, however, was insistent. At that time, the Abbott and Costello pictures were making millions of dollars; they were the top box office attraction throughout the world. The studio offered me a deal I just couldn't turn down. So, after much talking, I finally agreed to do just ONE picture and that's it.

CM: Your first picture with the team was *Hit The Ice* [filmed in 1942, released in 1943], but you didn't work with them again until eight years later in *Abbott & Costello In The Foreign Legion* (1950).

LAMONT: After I finished *Hit The Ice*, I told the studio that I didn't want to do any more of their pictures, and I meant it. But in 1950, I was again offered the chance to direct one of their films, this time at a considerable raise if I accepted. So I did *Abbott & Costello In The Foreign Legion*, and as it turned out, I couldn't get rid of them after that. [Laughs]

CM: What was it like working with the team?

LAMONT: There were times when it got to be

quite a challenge. Bud was an angel; a real gentleman. But Lou was a real eccentric. I guess all comics are, more or less, but Lou was like a big kid—only he was too old to be acting like one. I think part of it was an attempt to cover up his grief. Poor Lou. His baby boy [Lou Costello, Jr.] drowned in the family pool. He loved that boy dearly and he never got over the loss.

Anyway, the boys were a handful. Most of the time while I was setting up a scene, they'd be in one of their trailers playing poker. And this was no cheap card game! Thousands of dollars would change hands every day. Bud and Lou would sit there with fistfuls of one-hundred dollar bills.

When we were ready to shoot, the assistant director would call them. Bud knew a little about what was going on because he would at least look over the script ahead of time. Lou, however, was a different story. "What are we doing here?" he would say. "Don't worry, I'll catch up with you." That was the extent of his preparation. Fortunately, he was a quick study, but I still worried. After Lou would do a scene he would announce that the shot was good enough and he'd start heading for his trailer so he could resume the poker game. Look, I'd say, "I'll tell you when it's good enough! We're going to do it again!"

CM: It's been documented that the team quarreled frequently. Were you ever a witness to any serious disagreements between the two?

LAMONT: No, not at all. But the publicity people always played up that sort of thing. They said the boys had no rapport, which is not true at all. Have you ever heard of any successful team that hasn't been accused of fighting?

CM: What was the shooting schedule for one of their pictures?

LAMONT: It was very flexible. One picture might take three weeks to shoot while another might take four. This didn't include location work, though, which I did myself. From beginning to end the whole project would take about twelve weeks, including post-production work.

Sometimes things would get delayed because Lou would decide to take off. Lou liked to bet on the horses. He owned a race horse named Bazooka, and when Bazooka was running, he'd have one of his entourage place a bet for him; a typical wager was three-thousand dollars to win, two-thousand to place, and one-thousand to show. But there were many times when he would decide that he wanted to go to the track and see the race. He would just take off, which made it rather difficult filming; I'd have a straight man and no comic. Lou was a star, however, and he could get away with those sort of things. I just made their pictures and, frankly, I wonder why I didn't get ulcers.

Sometimes I had to get firm with him, though. Once, Lou wanted to take off in the middle of filming and told me to just shoot around him. I told him, "If you take off, you're going to pay the day's salary for each and every person on this set; the money's going to come out of your own pocket." The front office backed me on this, too. Lou stayed, but he wasn't a bit happy about it.

CM: Did you make contributions to the scripts?

LAMONT: I helped write the scripts of all the pictures I directed. [Lamont also contributed gags to A&C's *Pardon My Sarong* (1942), directed by Erle C. Kenton.] But since I was already getting the director's credit, I figured that was all the billing I needed. I didn't feel it was necessary to stamp my



name all over the place.

CM: How was an A&C script developed?

LAMONT: A writer or a couple of writers would come up with a synopsis or outline for the boys and it would be presented to the Story Department. They'd write a script and pass it along to John Grant and myself. If we liked it, we'd develop it.

John was a great guy. He had been their gag man since they first started in the movies. At one time he had been a straight man in burlesque, so he was very familiar with the routines. John was always on the set with me, and together we came up with a finished script.

CM: Did Bud and Lou participate in any of the story conferences?

LAMONT: No. I can't say that they weren't interested; they just never bothered about it. Both of them were too busy going to the races or what-have-you. Things were left entirely to John and myself.

In fact, neither one of them even bothered about okaying a script. We'd present them with a finished script and they would do it. Once in a while, they'd suggest a gag or maybe ad-lib something,

but not too often. Bud never did, and Lou very seldom. I think that was because their minds really weren't on what they were doing. As a rule, they stayed pretty close to the dialogue that was written.

CM: Of all your pictures with the team, A&C *Meet Captain Kidd* [released by Warner Bros., 1952] was the only one that was not produced by Universal. What do you remember about that film?

LAMONT: We made that film at some strange little studio that I can't recall the name of [Motion Picture Center Studios]. It was one of their independent productions, and Bud was the producer [Woodley Productions]. They had already made *Jack And The Beanstalk* (1952) for Lou's company, Exclusive Productions.

What I remember most about that film was that Charles Laughton played Captain Kidd and was absolutely marvelous. You know, he wouldn't let a stuntman do his pratfalls for him. The first day he was on the set, Laughton saw a double dressed in a costume identical to his. He was horrified! "Oh, no!" he yelled. "I want to do my own pratfalls! That's why I'm making this picture. I want to

(continued)



be a buffoon!" He had a lot of fun on that picture.

CM: Another legendary actor, Boris Karloff, co-starred in *A&C Meet Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* [1953]. What was he like to work with?

LAMONT: Boris was a refined English gentleman; very polished, very well educated, and a very fine actor. And it really irked him to be making a picture with Abbott and Costello. He didn't understand why he was even in the picture [Note: This was Karloff's second film with the team. The first was *Abbott And Costello Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff* (1949), directed by Charles Barton.]

There was a scene where Karloff had to ride in a two-seated hansom with Helen Wescott and Craig Stevens. It was pretty cramped in there, but it was supposed to be, since Stevens was intruding upon Boris and Helen. Boris didn't like it. "Do I have to do this?," he asked. "This is indecent! I'm sitting on their laps!" I explained that the scene was written that way—and after all, this was a comedy. He just grumbled, "Okay, let's get on with it."

CM: Did pictures like *A&C Meet The Invisible Man* and *A&C Go To Mars* pose any technical

problems because of all the special effects involved?

LAMONT: No, not really...none that I can recall, anyway. Universal had a first-rate effects department, and they were great troubleshooters. They'd let you know what you could and couldn't do, and there was hardly anything that they couldn't do.

CM: Do you have a favorite among the A&C pictures you directed?

LAMONT: I'd have to say my favorite is *Abbott And Costello Meet the Keystone Kops* [1955]. That was the only one of their pictures where I conceived the original idea. I thought it was a very funny combination since the Keystone Kops were some of the funniest people we ever had in movies.

When I wrote the story for the picture, the producer, Howard Christie, told me, "You'll have to get in touch with Mack Sennett because you're going to use his name." Sennett was retired by then, but I had worked for him years before and we had become friends. When I contacted him, he told me that it would cost five hundred dollars to use his name. That was a paltry sum, even in those

days. Then I asked him if he would like to play a bit in the film. "Yeah," he said, "but that will cost you another five hundred."

CM: Didn't Lou become ill during the production of one of the films?

LAMONT: Lou had to drop out of *Fireman Save My Child* [1954] because of illness. I used to go over to his house to try and cheer him up and he'd be stretched out in a harness in his bed. Lou had rheumatic fever and was bedridden for a while. But Universal wanted to finish the picture, so I made a test of two other actors—Hugh O'Brian and Buddy Hackett. The studio accepted them as suitable replacements, but since they weren't big names at the time, Spike Jones and His City Slickers were chosen to star in the film.

So I rewrote the script around Spike and his madmen. Originally, I was going to direct the picture. It was my project. I had picked the actors and everything, but my agent, Eddie Sherman, wouldn't let me do it. Sherman, who also handled Bud and Lou, saw the test I did with O'Brian and Hackett. He was horrified. "You can't do this, Charles," he said. "You're Bud and Lou's director. Besides that, you're scheduled to do a Judy Canova picture [*Untamed Heiress*, 1954] over at Republic." So they brought in another director [Leslie Goodwins] to make *Fireman Save My Child*.

CM: Your last picture with the team was *A&C Meet The Mummy* [1955], which was also their last film for Universal.

LAMONT: Right, and it's one of my favorite pictures. When we made it, the boys were having problems with the studio. They were unhappy because their pictures weren't pulling in the kind of grosses they should have been. The funny thing about it was that *A&C Meet The Mummy* rejuvenated the pair and the studio offered them a new contract. *Meet The Mummy* was the last picture made under their old contract and when it was released, it did terrific business. But there were differences between both parties; I believe it was a monetary conflict. So Bud and Lou never signed it. They should have, though. The only picture they did after that was *Dance With Me, Henry* [United Artists, 1956]. After that, they split up and Lou tried to make it as a single, but it didn't work. Lou needed Bud. After all those years together, you couldn't imagine once without the other.

CM: It's sad to think of what happened to them during their final years. They had a lot of problems with the Internal Revenue Service regarding back taxes.

LAMONT: Bud and Lou always had tax problems. They finally got things straightened out, but it cost them a lot of money. I don't think it was done deliberately, though. It was just that they made so much money and they didn't know how to handle it. They had business managers, but neither Bud nor Lou paid one bit of attention to them. They had a terrific contract with Universal, too. I believe they got \$250,000 apiece per picture, with rights to the picture after a certain period of time. That wasn't bad at all.

But they enjoyed their fortune while it lasted. They were very generous. Their wives, who were both darling women, even gave a big shower for my younger daughter. And you should have seen the bar that Bud had! It must have been fifty feet long! And I remember after Lou settled with the government, he threw a party for the IRS agents! Those two really knew how to live. ■

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Being and Gilligan's Island



by Rudy Minger

Gilligan's Island, the CBS sitcom that made its debut in 1964, is generally considered to be one of the low points of television history. Yet when looked at more closely, this is a show that operates on many levels. Under the guise of innocuous comedy, *Gilligan's Island* is really a penetrating allegory about the individual and his search for identity.

Consider the main character, Gilligan. Unlike everyone else on the show, we know virtually nothing about him. We do not even know if Gilligan is his first or last name. Where he came from, who his parents were, whether he has any relatives or friends, where he went to school, what he did for a living before he met the Skipper, we are never told, and we never find out. Everyone else in the cast reveal bits and pieces about themselves as the series progresses.

The Skipper, Ginger, Mary Ann, the Professor, and Mr. and Mrs. Thurston Howell III all have clearly defined histories and identities. Only Gilligan does not. In fact, his clearest personality trait is his utter lack of a personality. Things happen to him, but he never initiates anything.

He doesn't even have a real profession. Gilligan is First Mate of the S.S. Minnow in name only, and he, unlike the Skipper, is obviously not a man of the sea. He appears to have taken the job because it was the only one available to him.

Gilligan's conception of human relationships is rudimentary at best. Ginger and Mary Ann alternately mystify and terrify him. The Professor, his (and everyone else's) intellectual superior, is a remote figure he cannot really communicate with.

Mr. and Mrs. Howell are so far above his social and financial class that they might as well be friendly aliens from another planet. The closest thing Gilligan has to a real human relationship is his friendship with the Skipper, but even here the Skipper's status as an authority figure and former employer interfere with whatever relationship there is.

But once all these people are shipwrecked, Gilligan suddenly has something he never really had before; an identity. He is no longer a faceless nobody, an anonymous employee. He is part of a group. He is a castaway among fellow castaways, even an equal on some levels. And here we find the subtle hidden message in *Gilligan's Island*; Gilligan, having at last found some sort of identity, will do anything to avoid losing it even if he has to stay on the island for the rest of his life. Thus, on a subconscious level he fouls up every attempt to escape from the island because he doesn't want to leave. Far from being a helpless victim of circumstance, he has in fact found true freedom for the first time ever.

After all, if the castaways are rescued, what happens to Gilligan? On the island, he has an important position. He's the only one young, strong and healthy enough to do most of the menial work that enables the rest of the islanders to survive. There's plenty of food (even if most of it seems to be coconuts) and an endless variety of friendly animals. Because Gilligan has so little concept of his existence in civilized society, it naturally makes sense that he gets along better with animals than he does with people.

If and when they are rescued, the other castaways have lives to go back to. All except Gilligan.

While this would at first seem to be a weakness, it turns out to be Gilligan's greatest strength. He alone is able to truly adapt himself to living on the island. The Skipper, a restless man of the sea, is always going somewhere, doing something, always engaged in a plan. The Professor buries himself in his scientific experiments, coping through denial. Ironically, in spite of all of his intelligence and learning, the one thing he cannot do is figure out a way to get off the island that will not somehow be thwarted by Gilligan, fate, or just plain bad luck. It is also notable that the two castaways most accomplished in the outside world, the Skipper and the Professor, are so tied up in their respective occupations that they are never referred to or addressed by their real names.

Ginger and Mary Ann keep themselves going with delusions. Ginger dreams of returning to her life as a Hollywood movie star (ironically, Gilligan, who presumably didn't have much of a social life back home, is the only other castaway who's actually seen her pictures). Mary Ann periodically dreams of someday returning to Kansas, a subtle homage to *The Wizard of Oz*. The two women are also the only ones who want to return to a specific place. Gilligan and the Skipper lived in Hawaii before the shipwreck, since the S.S. Minnow took off from there, but they are obviously not natives. We never find out where any of the men came from. This is surely not accidental. Women are the nest builders and men are not; or so went the thinking of the time.

The Howells, trapped in a situation in which their money is useless, resort to using their breeding and their upper-class mannerisms as a survival mechanism. Next to Gilligan, they seem to have the easiest time adapting. Being so rich, they were never truly part of the real world; thus, a change in worlds is less drastic for them. Still, they're willing to help out where they can and provide a certain calming influence on the rest of the castaways. It should also be noted that the Howells are among the few millionaire married couples in television history who are contentedly married and faithful to each other. Imagine if the J.R. Ewings had been on that three hour tour...

The castaways of *Gilligan's Island* were eventually rescued in a later television movie, not by any plan of the Professor's but by a fluke storm that blew them back to civilization. This could be read as a subtle message about both the power of nature and the limits of technology. As things turned out, none of them found civilization quite to their liking. To cite two examples, the Professor found out that all the wonderful ideas he'd been working on had already been invented and Ginger found out that modern movie stars were expected to take their clothes off. At the end, they found themselves marooned on another island due to a series of accidents—or were they? There is a school of thought that maintains that there are no accidents. Perhaps the castaways came to realize what Gilligan intuitively knew all along; that they were better off on the island. And perhaps they know now that there's a little bit of Gilligan in all of us. ■

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Tiger Jeet Singh vs Mr. Gannosuke - Barbed wire barricade match where both men are tossed into the barbed wire "ropes" several times. Pogo sets Onita on fire at match end.

Leatherface vs Terry Funk - Barbed wire barricade and chain match. Both men are chained together with a 15 or 20' length of steel chain and go in and out of the ring several times before Funk is busted open. Both men climb up a twenty foot section of fence while chained together to continue their battle.

Cactus Jack vs Terry Gordy - Barbed wire wrapped baseball bat and a tray of 10,000 thumb tacks in the center of the ring. A couple of good slams into the thumb tacks and a few good swats with the bat are a real plus in this match!

Shouji Nakamaki vs Hiroshi Ono - Barbed wire wrapped baseball bat and thumbtack match. Both men busted open and they slam each other into the tacks so hard that they get stuck in their heads! Brutal shit.

Terry Funk vs Tiger Jeet Singh - Barbed wire barricade and plate glass match. They add sheets of plate glass to the mix this time around and the two men take each other on in a great brawl.

Cactus Jack vs Shouji Nakamaki - Barbed wire and bed of nails barricade match. They add sheets of plywood with nails hammered through it to the barricade this round. The two men throw the barbed wire wrapped and nailed sheets of plywood into the ring so they can use them as weapons on each other. Brutal and bloody!

Terry Funk vs Cactus Jack - Electrified barbed wire in place of the ring ropes and sheets of plywood wrapped in barbed wire and explosive charges around the ring. Both men are a bloody mess. They bring aluminum ladders in the ring, get caught in the explosions and brawl all over the place. Cactus Jack gets the win and is crowned "Death Match Champion."

BONUS MATCH - Cactus Jack defends his Death Match Championship against Kanemura on 5/5/96 in a barbed wire barricade spider net and glass death match. The ring is surrounded on two sides by a barbed wire and plate glass trap and the ring ropes are wrapped in barbed wire on the remaining two sides. Cactus was doing his "Mankind" schtick by this time but defended the title with all of the reckless abandon he was known for. Both men hit the traps and the blood flows. Cactus retains the title.

Mr. Pogo takes on the FMW in a barbed wire match.

Traps on 2 sides of the ring. Pogo breaks out the weapons, blows fire on his opponent and breaks out a barbed wire wrapped baseball bat. No gimmick is left unused! Match escalates into a multi-wrestler brawl!

Tarzan Goto vs FMW - Starts out rather traditional but soon spills onto the floor. Chairs, foreign objects and meat tenderizing mallets!

Megumi Kudo vs Combat Toyoda - Females go to town in electrified barbed wire match. These chicks go at it too!

Ian Rotten & DWD break out the tables and have a ball!

WING weapons match - Barbed wire ring ropes are wrapped with light bulbs. Chairs, barbed wire wrapped plywood sheets, 55 gallon drums and barbed wire baseball bat in the ring.

More WING madness! - Tank of scorpions center ring and giant cactus in two corners. You've got to get a ten count in the scorpion tank to get the win!

Four-man barbed wire scaffold match highlight.

Bloody weapons brawl highlight.

Onita & Goto take on The Sheik and his partner in a fire match where the flames get so overwhelming that everyone has to bail out.

Basic barbed wire match highlight.

Texas Hangmen do a number Ono and his partner. Ladders, cow bell, barbed wire baseball bat... even a hangman's noose comes into play!

Mr. Pogo vs Onita - Highlights of Exploding barbed wire match where both men are tossed into the barbed wire "ropes" several times. Pogo sets Onita on fire at match end.

Pogo vs Onita - Highlights of time bombed, electrified barbed wire cage match. The whole ring area is set to "blow" at a designated time in a huge cloud of dust, smoke and flame.

Ono vs Nakamaki in a barbed wire strap match. Just like any other strap match except the wrestlers are hooked together with a braided 15 or 20 foot length of barbed wire.

Pogo vs Great Nita (or Great Mita... they all look alike don't you know!) in a lumberjack and weapons match. Not only can you use weapons in this match but the ring is surrounded by several wrestlers that toss you back in the ring if you try to escape. Pogo attacks with blade, barbed wire bat, chair and flame. Both guys bloody as hell by match end.

Hayabusa vs Onita - Exploding barbed wire cage match. Bizarre and brutal match where the cage explodes when you hit it. At a predetermined time, the entire cage explodes in a cloud of flame and dust.

Terry Funk and Pogo vs Hayabusa and Tanaka - Electrified barbed wire rope hell match with land mines around the ring. Blood, explosions... more blood. Great match.

Tokuda and The Iceman vs The Head Hunters - Barbed wire match.

Pogo vs Kanemura - Highlight of a barbed wire baseball bat match where Pogo sets the bat on fire and attacks with a flaming bat.

Onita vs some karate guy in an electrified, exploding barbed wire barricade double hell match. Translation: The ring has barbed wire ropes on two sides and exploding traps on the floor up against the other two sides. Both guys are a mess by the time the match is through.

Terry Funk vs Pogo - Electrified, exploding barbed wire barricade double hell match (as above) Funk attacks with a flaming branding iron and chair. Bonus Funk rant at match end.

Nagayo vs Tsuchiya - Pogo-style attack by Nagayo. Brawl goes in and out of the ring, weapons used, both guys bloody.

Pogo & Tanaka & Kuroda vs The Headhunters & Oya - Bloody brawl clip.



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Strange Cargo

Bela Lugosi's Maiden Voyage to America



By Frank J. Dello Stritto & Gary Don Rhodes

Bela Lugosi, then an unknown 38 year-old Hungarian actor and political exile, first arrived in the United States on December 4, 1920 aboard the steamship *Graf Tisza Istvan* ("Count Steven Tisza"). In less than a decade, he would film his classic *Dracula* in Hollywood and be awaiting its release. The basic facts of his maiden voyage have been long established. The ship sailed from Trieste; Lugosi worked in the crew, and upon his arrival immediately went to New York City. Much more detail on the voyage has recently been unearthed from shipping news reported in New Orleans' newspapers and from the US National Archives, which keeps ship arrival records, mainly for genealogical research. These reliable documents can be compared to the colorful tales about the passage that have become part of the Lugosi legend.

Lugosi rarely reminisced on record about his time on the *Graf Tisza Istvan*. One brief comment occasionally appears in publicity for his 1930s and 1940s films:

"It was in December, in 1920 that I left Europe on a cargo-boat. The weather was appalling. In a very heavy sea and storm the cargo of the boat was

in a slanting position, which resulted in a delay in our scheduled arrival to New Orleans before Christmas. You can imagine spending, unprepared, a Christmas Eve on a slanting, floating cargo boat. I locked myself in my cabin, and the rest is too personal to me to be given to the public."

Lugosi embellishes the account, but not much. He left Europe in late October, not December, and spent Christmas eve safely onshore, probably in New York. But the ship was weeks late on a routine voyage. In a 1941 interview for *Modern Screen*, Lugosi elaborated to Gladys Hall:

"Our cargo was steel plates. There was a very heavy storm at sea. Our ship turned over on its side and for three and a half weeks we were that way. Five weeks it took us to go from Trieste to New Orleans. Spend three and a half weeks turned sideways upon a raging sea and the mind totters and heaves like the seas beneath."

Much of this account is roughly correct. The *Graf Tisza Istvan* arrived in New Orleans about 5 weeks after leaving Trieste, and about three and a half weeks after leaving Gibraltar and entering the open Atlantic. But probably no shipment of steel plates ever went from Italy to America. The ship's cargo on arrival in the United States, as reported in the December 7, 1920 *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, was 12,250 boxes of lemons, 185 cases of grapes,

230 cases of preserves, 275 bags of almonds and 125 bags of fillet nuts. That produce was loaded in Palermo about a week after the *Graf Tisza Istvan* left Trieste. Quite possibly, steel was loaded at Trieste, an industrial port, and unloaded at Palermo, an agricultural port. The days when the Americas would import even lemons from Europe were numbered, as the United States would soon become the world's largest producer and exporter of citrus fruits. Precisely why the ship was so late in arriving in New Orleans is not known, but Lugosi himself simply blamed the weather.

For each member of the crew, the ship's manifest lists name, age, sex, race & nationality, height & weight, ability to read, date & place of signing on, and position in the ship's company. Average height and weight of the crew, 5'7" and 152 pounds, was typical of the time, and the average age was 32. Lugosi, at 6'1", was the tallest man onboard, and at age 38 was six years older than his Captain, Lodovico Szabo. Race of all 39 men who eventually made the voyage is given as "European," and nationality as "Italian," though clearly many were not. Only three—Gennaro Sappio, Domenico Ascione and Alberto Gitz—were illiterate. They were part of the nine man team of "firemen" who stoked coal into the engine furnaces.

From data in the manifest, movements of the *Graf Tisza Istvan* just prior to the voyage can be discerned. Some of the crew were "old hands"—had been on the ship for months and years—but most positions saw high-turnover. The ship's home port was Monfalcone, across the bay from Trieste, and groups of men signed-on about every two weeks: around September 25, 1920 (when Captain Szabo took command), then around October 10 and again around October 25. Two weeks is not long enough for a round trip voyage to America, so the *Graf Tisza Istvan* probably did short charters in the Mediterranean. Lugosi joined the company at Monfalcone on Thursday, October 26. He and 24 year-old Natale Miandielo were the last crew members to board before leaving port. The manifest in the National Archives is the "List or Manifest of Aliens Employed on the Vessel as Members of Crew" required of any vessel landing in a US port. Captain Szabo prepared the document in English, listing all 37 men then onboard as Italian, and sailed for Palermo to load the fruit, nuts and preserves. The manifest lists Lugosi as apprentice (i.e., "Appr."). Ship's crews are usually rather young; and a 38 year-old apprentice at sea is almost as rare as a 38 year-old rookie in baseball. Lugosi must have been rather persuasive to land the job.

The US Consulate at Palermo notarized the crew manifest when the *Graf Tisza Istvan* again set sail on November 3. The vessel stopped briefly at Gibraltar to take on two more crewmen, Romeo Fiume and Mario Leban, and again the local U. S. Consulate notarized the amended manifest. On November 9, the ship finally sailed into the Atlantic. Coming from land-locked Hungary, Lugosi had never seen an ocean before.

On November 13, *The Times-Picayune* estimated the *Graf Tisza Istvan* arrival as November 22. On the 22nd, the ship was nowhere in sight, and thereafter day-by-day each update of shipping activity pushes the arrival back a day. The crew manifest includes no radio officer, and perhaps the ship had no way to communicate its delay to

shore. On the night of December 4, twelve days overdue, the Graf Tisza Istvan reached New Orleans. It had to wait a day until its berth on St. James Street could receive it. In addition to Lugosi, five men disembarked: Miandielo, Fiume, Loban, Pietro Fiaraguna, the 2nd Steward, and Giovanni Albanese, a 16 year-old cook's boy, the youngest man onboard.

No more information can be squeezed from the terse manifest and shipping news, but they can be measured against the full-blooded account of Lugosi's first trans-Atlantic crossing in Robert Cremer's 1976 biography *Lugosi - The Man Behind the Cape*. Cremer pieces the tale Lugosi himself allegedly told in private, and the recollections of a shipmate, Hugo Koepleneck. Both versions came to Cremer via Lugosi's long-time friend, Willi Szittja. A brief summary of the Cremer/Szittja/Koepleneck account is:

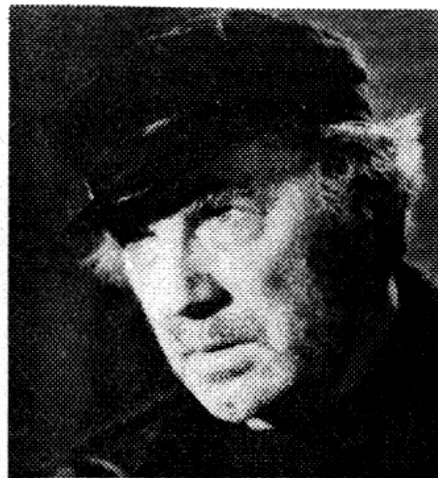
Lugosi arrived in Trieste from Berlin in mid-October 1920. Many penniless refugees crowded into the city, but Lugosi was not one of them. He could not afford passage to America, but his year in Berlin (where he made 10 films after fleeing Hungary) gave him a bit of a bankroll. He hoped to hire on a ship bound for the United States. His only credentials were his time almost 25 years before as a riveter and machinist's apprentice. Luigi Cozzi, the portmaster in charge of issuing seamen's papers, immediately saw through Lugosi's claims of experience, but he needed able-bodied men, and he was touched by the refugees' plight. Lugosi never saw Cozzi again, but as with anyone who ever helped him Lugosi never forgot his generosity. Lugosi got his papers, signed on the Graf Tisza Istvan, and watched the iron beams loaded.

Cremer accepts the fiction of the cargo of steel plates or beams, but one point in the manifest might put a different shading on this part of Cremer's story. That Lugosi is "apprentice" in the ship's company implies that the job was more due to Cozzi's kind heart than any shortage of men. Lugosi remembered his position as "assistant engineer," though no such position exists in ships' companies and the Graf Tisza Istvan had a full complement of Chief, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Engineers. With a crew of 36 onboard at Trieste, the ship was not undermanned. It did stop to take on two more men at Gibraltar—but that was probably a simple economy: they were not needed in the Mediterranean, but would be in the Atlantic.

Cremer's tale becomes fantastic once the Graf Tisza Istvan passes Gibraltar. After a few days trying to develop sea-legs, Lugosi regained his good spirits and a rather expansive mood. He regaled the crew with tales of his exploits in Hungary and met with stony silence. In 1919, he had sided with the revolutionaries; the crew almost to a man were ultra-royalists. Hostility against him grew among them until Lugosi's very life was in danger. Even Captain Szabo gave his tacit approval of disposing of the "traitor." Chief Engineer Koepleneck and 2nd Engineer Felix Hartman became Lugosi's protectors, and literally hid him for weeks in the bowels of the ship. The thirst for Lugosi's blood did not slacken through the weeks of the voyage, and he had to constantly change his hiding place to evade capture. Koepleneck and Hartman smuggled him food when they could, but the crew watched them closely. After weeks of this living hell, the Graf Tisza Istvan finally arrived in New Orleans. Exhausted and starving Lugosi clambered over the side into a raft, and was finally saved by the harbor patrol.

Can this incredible story be true? If such hostility did indeed erupt onboard, it had to be after Gibraltar when Lugosi could no longer leave. Seaman are often portrayed as politically conservative, but as suggested in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* filmed a few years after the voyage, that stereotype does not always fit. As with all the men who left the ship in New Orleans, a simple "discharged" is stamped above Lugosi's name on the manifest, with no indication of any exceptional circumstances. An overriding concern of freighter captains is avoiding delays in entering or leaving ports, particularly those involving port and government authorities. Such delays are expensive, especially with a cargo of ripening fruit already two weeks late in the hold, and could easily cost a captain his command. Would Captain Szabo have encouraged a situation that could only invite inquiries or worse? And why must Lugosi starve with a cargo of grapes, nuts and preserves, not iron beams, to feast on?

The manifest does not show a crew of Hungarian royalists bemoaning the loss of their monarch. Of the 39 men listed, 17 have Italian surnames; another 13 Italian first names—hardly surprising on an Italian freighter, which officially lists its entire crew as "Italian." Italy still had its King Victor Emmanuel III, and any Italians among the crew would have been unlikely to mourn the



downfall of Austro-Hungarian Emperor (and King of Hungary) Charles I. What is most suggestive in the manifest is Koepleneck and Hartman. Koepleneck (spelled "Kaplanek" on the manifest) is not the Chief Engineer, as related by Cremer and Szittja, but 2nd Officer, a far less senior position and, as it might be described today, on a distinctly different career path. There is no 2nd Engineer Felix Hartman—no Felix or Hartman at all (there is a Felice Vukosia, 1st Steward) and the 2nd Engineer was a Robert Stulz. Did Kaplanek simply get some names wrong when he told his story to Szittja? Did Szittja confuse Kaplanek's position in the crew, as he misspelled his name? Over the years, did Kaplanek shift his most colorful sea tale to his most famous shipmate, and also give himself a new career and a promotion? If not—if Kaplanek's tale is true—could Lugosi have resisted telling his own version of this most incredible adventure? For sailors and actors alike, tall tales get taller over time.

On March 23, 1921 Lugosi reported to Immigration Services on Ellis Island off New York City. The data on the "Inspector's Interrogation During Primary Alien Inspection" is reprinted in Gary Don Rhodes' 1997 book, *Lugosi*. Whether specific information is as provided by Lugosi or interpreted by the interviewer (such as the misspelling of "Istvan" and the underestimate of Lugosi's height at 5'10") can only be speculated. Ellis Island certainly had competent linguists and translators in dozens of languages. All questions about nationality, race, language and country of birth are filled in simply "Roumanian." Legally, Lugosi may have been a Rumanian citizen, since his birthplace Lugoj became part of that country (and still is) after World War I. Ironically, his occupation is listed as "Sailor."

Anyone wishing a copy of the 4-page crew manifest for Lugosi's voyage on the Graf Tisza Istvan may inquire at their local branch of the US National Archives. Or they can send their address and a check for \$3.00 or £2.00 (entirely for copying and postage) to:

Frank J. Dello Stritto
62A Hamilton Place
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SCOTLAND

And be patient—as Bela Lugosi learned from bitter experience, trans-Atlantic crossings can sometimes be delayed. ■

LIST OF MANIFEST OF ALIENS EMPLOYED ON THE VESSEL AS MEMBERS OF CREW

Family name	Given name		When	Where
Szabo	Lodovico	Captain	24/9-20	Trieste
Vargha	Alexander	1 st Officer	24/9-20	Venezia
Kaplanek	Hugo	2 nd Officer	23/6-20	Napoli
Thian	Paolo	3 rd Officer	17/9-19	Brindisi
Lugosi	Bela	Appr.	26/10-20	Monfalcone
Heilich	Cynglielmo	Chief Engineer	11/10-20	Monfalcone

Kirk Alyn

Kirk Alyn was the first man to portray Krypton's only surviving son, in the Sam Katzman Superman serials from 1948 to 1950. Alyn, who died March 14, 1999 had a long show business career, which stretched from vaudeville to motion pictures, and even a guest shot in the 1960s on television's original *Dating Game*.

Alyn, whose other serials include *Blackhawk*, *Radar Patrol Vs. Spy King*, *Daughter of Don Q*, and *Federal Agents Vs. The Underworld*, had been battling Alzheimer's Disease for many years. Tabloids were fond of running stories about Superman curses, featuring Alyn as one of the recipients. In actual fact, Mr. Alyn was 88 years old when he died.

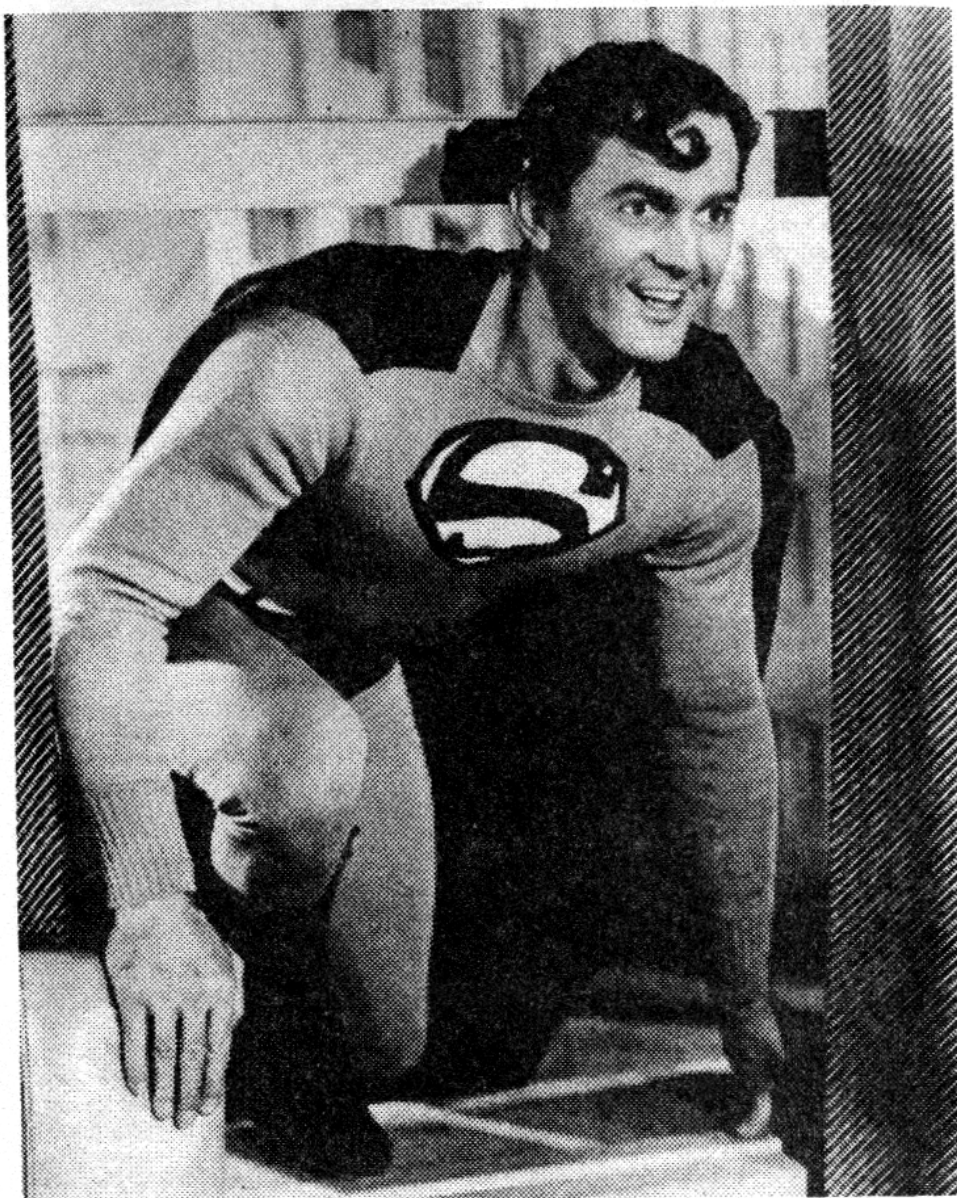
Alyn's film credits include *My Sister Eileen*, *You Were Never Lovelier*, *Little Miss Broadway*, *The Life of John the Baptist*, *Overland Mail Robbery*, and the Charlie Chan feature *The Trap*. Alyn also appeared in George Pal's *When Worlds Collide* and *Beginning of the End*.

Alyn, a native of Oxford, New Jersey, was born Joe Feggo, Jr. on October 8, 1910. His boyhood hero, ace silent screen stunt man Eddie Polo, inspired him to be a vaudevillian performer, as well as working in chorus lines. Alyn came to Hollywood after an invitation from his old pal, Red Skelton.

Besides his stage and screen roles, he was active in television commercials in the '50s and '60s. In 1962 he wrote a reminiscence for *Fantastic Monsters* magazine about portraying the Man of Steel. He shared memories about a meeting he had with television's Superman, George Reeves, in New York in 1958, shortly before Reeves' death. Alyn relates that on the set of one of the Superman serials, he met his hero, Eddie Polo. The book is a long out-of-print collector's item.

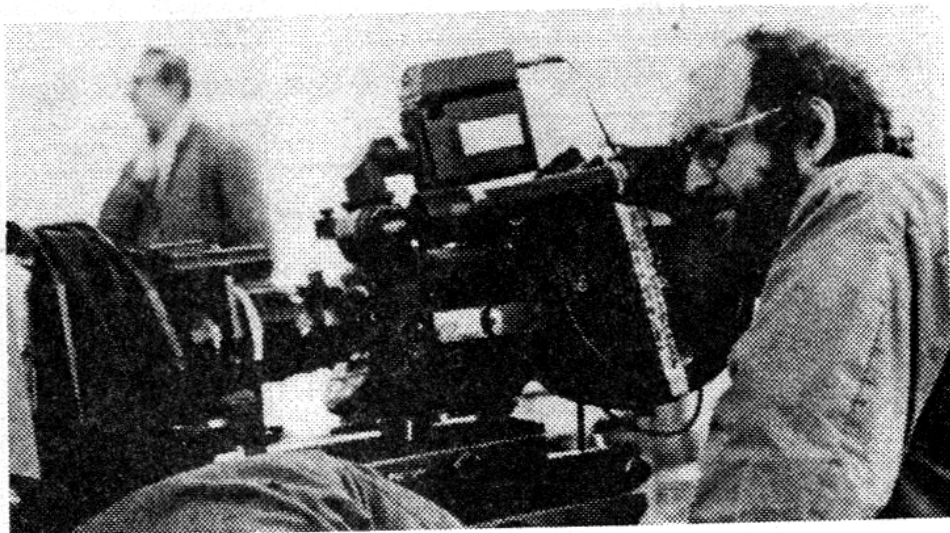
Alyn was a fixture on the convention circuit in the 1970s, and in 1978 he played a cameo role in the first Christopher Reeve *Superman* film. He will be sorely missed by friends and fans alike.

Jan Alan Henderson

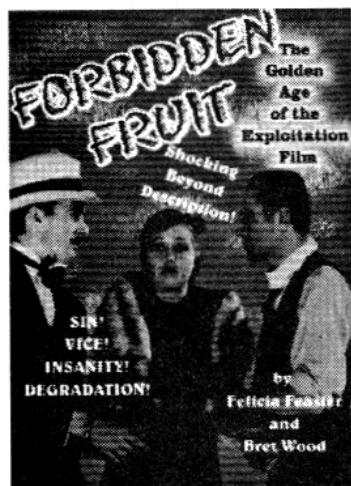


Stanley Kubrick

Some called him reclusive, sardonic and curiously boyish. In the past 35 years, Kubrick made only six films. His most recent, *Eyes Wide Shut* which will be released in July of this year, was in various stages of gestation for over twenty years, and before the cameras for an unprecedented 15 months. His films are cult films in the best sense of that term. In this now Kubrick-less universe, there is apt to be an overwhelming reappraisal of his legacy which included *Lolita* (1962), *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), and *The Shining* (1980). Kubrick died in England at the age of 70 on March 7, 1999.

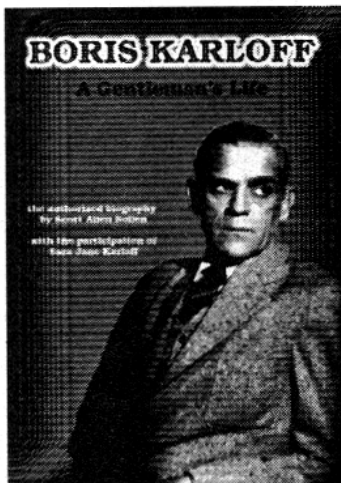


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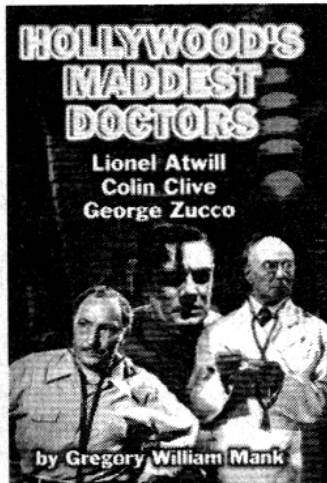


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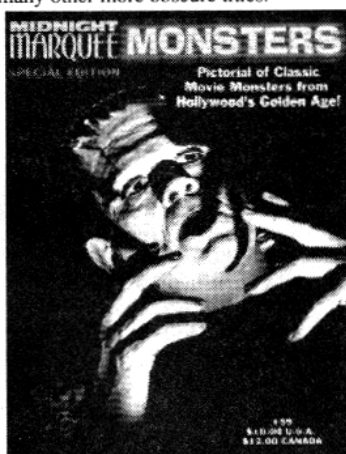
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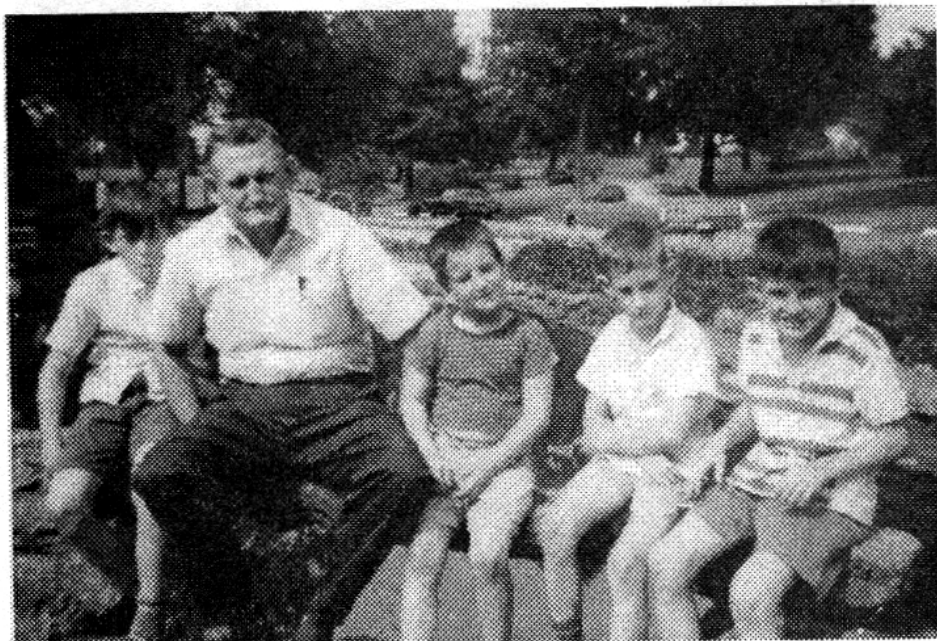
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Cult Movies Underground



Cult Movies editor Buddy Barnett (left), his father Doodle, and brothers Tommy, David and Eddy in July, 1968.

by Buddy Barnett

I'd like to start my comments for this issue by paying tribute to my father, W.A. 'Doodle' Barnett, who passed away from cancer in December of 1998. My Dad didn't have the least bit of interest in the type of movies that we celebrate in *Cult Movies Magazine*. Years back he was talked into seeing *E.T.* by my mother and my

younger brothers and sisters and he slept through most of it and at the end he asked, "What the hell was that thing, anyway?" Being a Korean war veteran, my Dad preferred war movies, if he hadn't been so sick, he probably would have enjoyed *Saving Private Ryan*. However, he never objected to our family's interest (including my Mom's) in weird movies. We really miss him.

On a happier note, I'd like to tell you readers about some exciting news. *Cult Movies* has its own television show! That's right, we've already taped our first episode of *Cult Movies TV*.

Cult Movies TV is a 30-minute talk show format version of our magazine. It features Mike Copner as host and I'm the side-kick. Marta Dobrovitz has a trivia segment on this and future episodes called "Marta's Movie Minute," which was very well received.

The staff of *Cult Movies*, Coco Olsen, William Barnett and Brad Linaweaver pitched in behind the scenes while the show was produced by Kathe Duba and directed by Kevin Cloud Brechner at P.C.A.C. in Pasadena. *Cult Movies TV* features some great theme music written especially for us by our friend, Italian composer Daniele Luppi.

Our first guest was Mr. Science Fiction himself, Forrest J Ackerman, and he was great. He really helped put our first show over. Brad Linaweaver also came on as a guest and worked well with Forry. In the future, we plan to do shows on a variety of topics including William Castle movies, Ed Wood, Harry Novak, Mack Sennett comedies, Frankenstein movies, Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi and many, many others. If any of you readers have suggestions on topics or guests, please write to us in care of this magazine.

By the time you have read this, our first show will have aired in Southern California. In future issues we will have more details on where the show will be cablecast. If you would like to purchase a copy of the first episode send \$9.95 plus \$3 postage and handling to *Cult Movies* at 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 152 Hollywood CA 90028.

More Forry news: Next issue we are featuring another joint effort with Forry on a new double issue featuring *Spacemen*. Of course, the magazine will be jam-packed with all of the material that you would expect to see in *Cult Movies* as well some great science fiction stuff from Forry. ■



Author Brad Linaweaver and Marta Dobrovitz.



Cult Movies publisher Michael Copner.

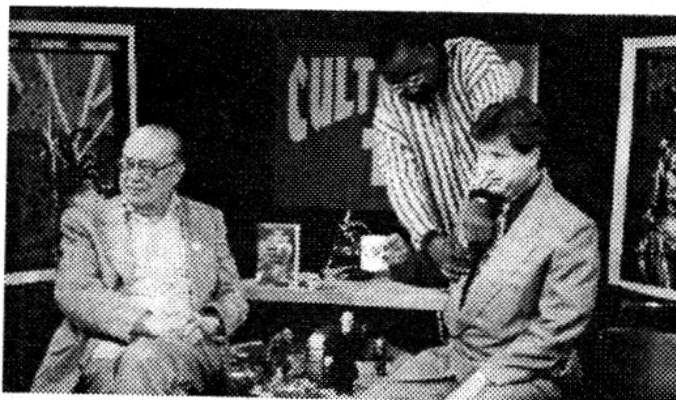


Marta in make-up with Brandilyn M. Amie.

Cult Movies TV



Mike and Buddy with producer Kathe Duba and director Kevin C. Brechner.



Forry and Mike get wired for sound by audio mixer HuTch.



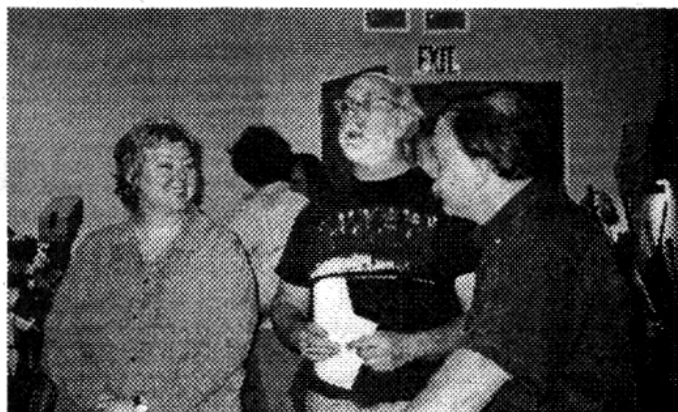
Mike and Buddy on the set of Cult Movies TV.



Forry, Brad and Mike.



Brad gets a touch-up from make-up artist Brandilyn M. Amie.



Kathe, director Kevin Brechner and stage manager Greg Kazanjian.

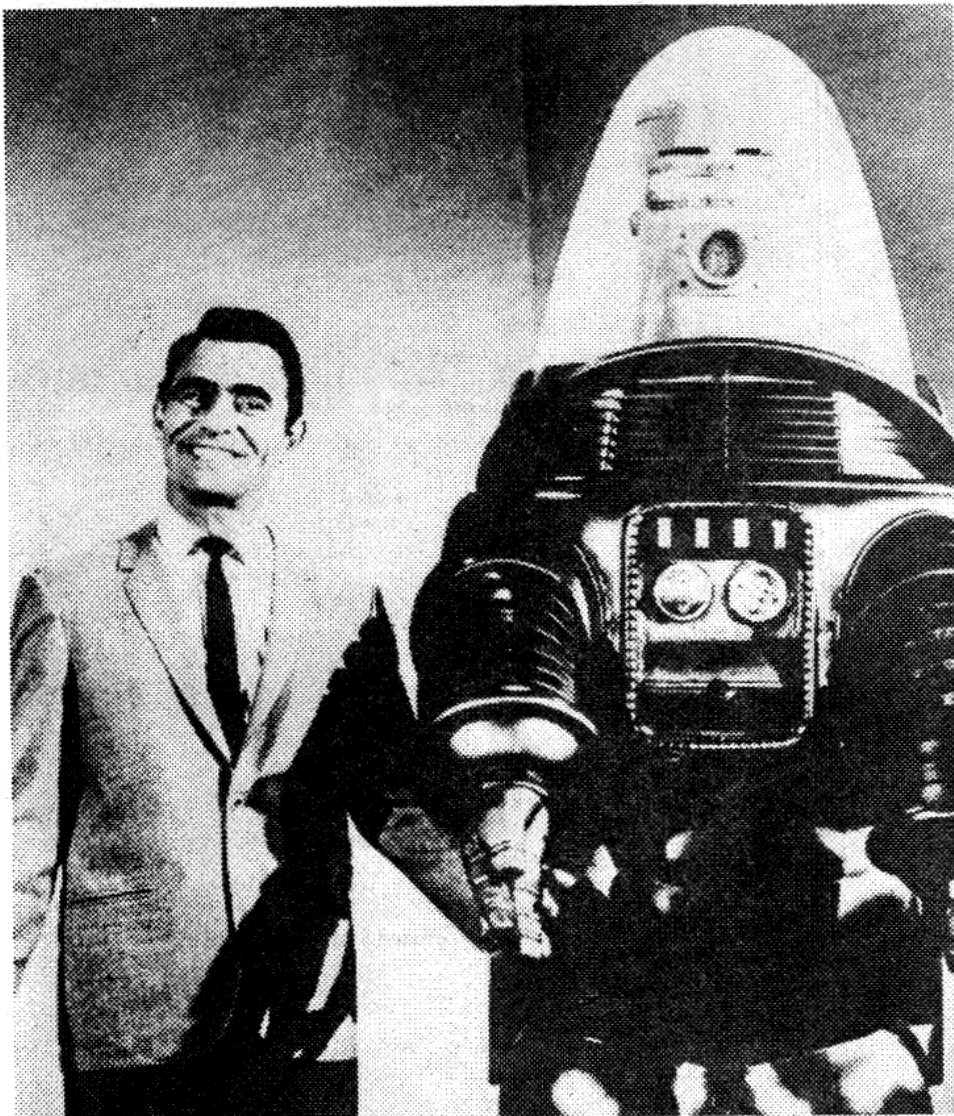


Mike and Buddy after a long day of taping.



Make-up artist Brandilyn M. Amie and Forry.

Spotlight on Hollywood



by Eric Caidin

The American Film Market was held at the Loews hotel in Santa Monica from Thursday Feb 25 through Friday March 5 as usual. The AFM is basically put together to sell films to international buyers from countries all over the world. There are over 300 screenings in Santa Monica theaters for a one week period to showcase the available product.

The film market was well represented by both major and independent studios having suites featuring elaborate displays of their film product and small screening rooms set up to run trailers and promo reels to prospective customers.

One of the most anticipated film screenings was that of Buena Vista's *13th Warrior*, formerly titled *Eaters of the Dead*. It was shown twice to a packed house. Initial response was terrific.

Business was considered steady but somewhat slower than last year. There were fewer genre films than ever as demand in the international market is for more action oriented films and erotic thrillers. Trimark Pictures had *Warlock 3* available. Santelmo Ent. was screening the 30th anniversary

edition of *Night of the Living Dead*, digitally remastered with fifteen minutes of new footage spliced in. Cinequench Pictures was handling the "new" Ed Wood film *I Woke Up Early The Day I Died* and the only screening had European buyers scratching their heads in bewilderment. There was eager anticipation for Dario Argento's new *Phantom of the Opera* showcasing Asia Argento with Julian Sands as the Phantom and it did not disappoint; graphics, action and acting were all good.

Overall, a decent show for buyers but disappointing for those interested in the science fiction and horror genre. Hopefully the success of the new *Star Wars* film will result in a lot more sci-fi films being made and shown at next years Film Market.

...

The 16th annual Wm. S. Paley television festival at the DGA Theater in Hollywood presented by The Museum of Television and Radio featured a rare treat for classic science fiction television fans with a very special tribute to *The Twilight Zone*, on Thursday March 4, 1999.

The two and a half hour program to a sold-out

audience started with the introduction of the special guests, a literal who's who gallery of *Twilight Zone* alumni including actors Earl Holliman, Martin Landau, Bill Mumy and Cliff Robertson. Writers included were Richard Matheson, Earl Hamner, and George Clayton Johnson. Producers present were Bert Granet, Buck Houston, and Del Reisman, along with story editors, casting director Ethel Winant and Carol Serling, widow of Rod Serling. Author and TZ historian Marc Scott Zicree was on hand to add historical facts and when needed, refresh rusty memories.

The evening started with an hour-long presentation of clips from some of the more memorable episodes in TZ's five year history. Also seen was rare Rod Serling introductory footage and the different show openings used over the years.

The guests then reflected upon their memories of Rod Serling and working on one of the most beloved shows in the sci-fi genre. If anyone was looking for any dirt or spicy Rod Serling stories, they came to the wrong place. Serling was one of the most respected and well liked veterans of the early TV industry starting with his success with *Playhouse 90*, his brilliant *Requiem For a Heavyweight* screenplay and an extraordinary relationship with Desilu studios and CBS in bringing his *Twilight Zone* vision to reality. In 5 years, Serling provided an astonishing 192 screenplays to the series—a most remarkable feat for any writer then as well as now. Along with some of the most talented actors and actresses, set designers, composers, fellow screenwriters and art directors, Serling was able to provide each week, brilliant thought provoking tales of fantasy on an astonishingly low budget. And the show still holds up today! It was generally agreed that without Serling's dedication to the show's development, it could not have lasted as long as it did and earn it's rightful place in television history.

A half hour of questions and answers through the audience interaction concluded the program and the guests graciously stayed around to sign autographs and chat with the fans. It was certainly a historic night for a historic show. For info on future media history shows and Museum Membership info, call 310-786-1032.

Special Film Review: *Phantom of the Opera*

The sixth theatrical version based on Gaston Leroux's classic novel is a further extension of director Dario Argento's strong visual sense when telling a story. Argento's strong points have always been his masterful use of art and set decor, sweeping cinematography and colorful imagery. In this new film, Argento's imagination flourishes. Julian Sands makes a dashing Phantom and Asia Argento, appearing in her third film for her father, is the Phantom's protegee. Christine is quite appealing and it is easy to see the Phantom's obsession with her. This classic retelling of the Beauty and The Beast variation is complete with Argento's signature use of graphic gore, colorful sets and brilliant use of shadows in the opera house's secret caverns and catacombs.

Currently without a United States distributor, *Phantom of the Opera* should certainly prove a good pick up investment for any enterprising independent film company out there.

See you next issue!
Eric Caidin

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Stuff To Read



Dark Shadows: Angelique's Descent

(by Lara Parker; Harper Fiction, 1998 - paperback, \$6.99). The influence of Dan Curtis' amazing gothic horror soap opera *Dark Shadows* (1966-1971) is undeniable. The fact that Harper Fiction has launched a new series of paperbacks based on the series is an great testament to its' popularity. And the fact that the first book in the series was written by an actual cast member detailing the life of the very character she portrayed makes it irresistible. And any leery fans who remember the cardboard plots and one-note characters of the "Dark Shadows" novels written by the late Dan "Marilyn" Ross, have no fear. This is an adult, well-researched novel; rich in period detail and character dimension.

Angelique, the psychically jealous witch who turned Barnabas Collins into a vampire and curse him to an eternity without love, was one of the most vivid characters on the old soap opera. Intensely portrayed by the beautiful Lara Parker, Angelique walked a tightrope between victim and oppressor. As Barnabas shall never love again, neither shall she; forever the victim of her own jealousy. Here, for the first time, DS fans learn of Angelique's childhood in Martinique. We see her dark journey from brilliant, angelic child to a lost demonic creature; obsessed, damned and demented.

Ms. Parker's prose is perhaps a bit overly-florid, but it never becomes annoying. In fact, as one reads along, it almost strikes a tone somewhere between a nineteenth century gothic novel and one written today. Not a bad tone for DS-inspired fiction.

The story opens at the same place the series ended: Collinwood Mansion, Collinsport Maine, 1971. All the characters we remember are there - Elizabeth, Roger Carolyn, David, Willie - and all are drawn with great precision. They are exactly the characters I remember and love, but what is more, they have been fleshed out into authentic-seeming human beings. All of well in Collinwood. Barnabas has finally been cured of his vampirism, and, out of gratitude, has finally consented to marry his love-sick friend and physician, Dr. Julia Hoffman.

Then Barnabas finds the long lost journal of Angelique, whose curse he believes has been broken along with his vampirism. He becomes obsessed with the tome, learning for the first time about Angelique's childhood and upbringing.

And then Angelique's story unfolds for the reader, as well. Although the story is always told through the eyes of Angelique, Parker does not adopt the voice of the child first-person, as if lifted directly from the journal. She opts instead to retain the omnipotent third-person already established in the frame story of Barnabas in 1971. The choice is effective, because it allows her the freedom to conjure up the flavor and socio-economic climate of Martinique in the late eighteenth century. She has obviously done considerable research. The portrait smacks of a living reality. She paints a sharp portrait of a sweltering tropical port run by cruel land barons and fueled on the backs of slaves. Voodoo and dark superstition also runs rampant. Be-

cause of its sense of time and place - and due to the complexity of the characters - this early section of the book is by far the most effective part. In fact, it is quite remarkable.

Angelique begins life in idyllic splendor with her mother, a former slave who practices white magic. The girl's life changes forever when her sugar plantation land baron father takes her away to use as a ceremonial living goddess to appease the rebellious, but superstitious, slaves.

It is here that Angelique first learns spells and dark magic. She is tempted by the devil, and uses his magic when her father attempts to have her sacrificed to appease a rebellion. But later, Angelique turns away from Satan, rejecting his dark magic. He continues to beckon to her, always tempting her in the background.

After Martinique breaks out in the violence of a slave rebellion, Angelique flees and tries to live a righteous life. She becomes the personal maid of Josette DuPres, daughter of Count and Countess Andre DuPres. She meets and falls for a lusty young American doing business for the Collins family of Maine. His name, of course, is Barnabas. They have a secret, torrid romance. Angelique falls fiercely in love with him. The romance continues even after Barnabas is forced by his father to court Josette's hand. It will be an arranged marriage in order to secure a merger with DuPres' operation. Angelique is content that it will always be her that Barnabas will truly love. She is not prepared, however, when Barnabas breaks off the romance, telling her that he has fallen in love with Josette. Angelique follows them to America, still retained as Josette's maid. Revenge smolders in her breast.

Up until this point the book retains its' detail and freshness. After this point in the story we are into the flashback story already presented in the original soap opera. It is material very familiar to Dark Shadows fans. Parker decides to cover the material at a lightning pace, not bothering with too much elaboration. Parker has chosen wisely not to bore her readers, but at this point the book loses some of the force of its' narrative thrust.

It does clip along, however, to its' inevitable conclusion; with Barnabas cursed to eternity as a vampire and Angelique damned, bound to the devil, and unable to love due to her unquenchable jealousy. The book returns to Barnabas in 1971, who, having gained a better understanding of his arch nemesis, feels cleansed and ready to face his future married to Julia Hoffman. The final tag feels a bit like a cheap horror movie with sequelitis, but upon examination I realized that it did serve the story's need. It reinserts Angelique back into the equation where she belongs. It could, however, have been done with some of the inventiveness which made the first part of the book so rewarding.

In the end, Ms. Parker does not escape the dilemma of trying to make familiar material fresh again. When she writes wholly from her own imagination, however, her vision is layered and rewarding, and her voice is clear and fresh. Let's see more books by Lara Parker. And lets hope the upcoming Harper "Dark Shadows" novels continue to be even partially as interesting as this one.

Reviewed by Ron Ford

The Universal Silents: A Filmography of the Universal Motion Picture Manufacturing Company, 1912-1929

(by Richard E. Braff, 683 pages, \$135 library binding. 1998, McFarland & Company, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640. To order call 1-800-253-2187.)

On June 8, 1912, Carl Laemmle of the Independent Motion Picture Company, Pat Powers of Powers Picture Company, Mark Dintenfuss of Champion Films, and Bill Swanson of American Eclair, meeting in New York City, signed a contract to merge their studios. The four formed a storied name in Hollywood history: the

Universal Motion Picture Manufacturing Company.

This book is an alphabetical listing of the over 9,000 silent era films released by Universal, including features, split reel, one, two and three reels, and serials. The film entries include title, release date, copyright date, producer, director, scenarist, author, length of film and major cast.

Once in a great while an oversight slips past Mr. Braff. I noticed the absence of a credit for Mary Philbin in the 1928 feature, *The Man Who Laughs*—an ironic omission since her name appears as star above Conrad Veidt in the posters and the actual film itself.

But then, comedy fans get an extra treat here. I've always liked the Blondie & Dagwood comedies Columbia cranked out, and I'd known that Arthur Lake had a career beyond just being Dagwood. But I never knew what. In this book you'll find listing for him in 86 different films at Universal, giving an idea what his career was like in the silent days.

A major undertaking and a job well done, this book belongs in every completist's library.

Reviewed by Gino Colbert

Aliens Above, Ghosts Below: Explorations of the Unknown

(by Barry E. Taff, PhD. 236 pages.)

This is one of the most fascinating first-person anthologies of unknown phenomenon available. Dr. Taff is one of the world's foremost authorities on the unknown and unexplained. His position as a researcher is neither to prove nor disprove but to present all legitimate facts to the public. This is written in a factual yet witty style that should keep the reader on the edge. Dr. Taff was founder of the Parapsychology Department at UCLA and has spent years documenting areas of experience presently unexplained by accepted science. Some of the cases presented here are fairly simple (a ghost cat which purrs and can be felt to walk over people's laps) to famous cases that became subjects for Hollywood films. Don't read this at bedtime, you won't get to sleep before dawn! The only way to get a copy of this is through the web site: www.netbooks.com

Reviewed by Coco Kiyonaga

Of Gods and Monsters: A Critical Guide to Universal Studios' Sci- ence Fiction, Horror, and Mystery Films, 1929-1939.

(by John T. Soister; 405 pages, \$65 illustrated casebound, photos & index. 1998, McFarland Press, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640)

While Universal's *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* have received the most coverage of any of the studio's genre releases, it is the lesser-known films that have long fascinated fans and historians. Starting with *The Last Warning*, a 1929 movie released as both a silent and a talkie, Universal provided a decade of films that entertained audiences and sometimes frustrated critics.

Each of Universal's horror, sci-fi, and "twisted mystery" films receives an in-depth essay in this book. The focus is first on the background to the making of the movie and its place in the Universal catalog. A detailed plot synopsis with critical commentary follows. Filmographic data for the film conclude the entry. Many rare illustrations and movie posters are included.

John T. Soister is a teacher in Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania, and a popular contributor to our magazine. His vision to do a book on Universal's seldom seen horrors is heroic, and could cause a new cult. I enjoyed his discourses on the true classics, but preferred his thoughts on *Mystery of the White Room* (1939) and other films from the sidelines. Soister has done his research in lots of other people's books, and recycles stories that do need to be re-circulated now and then, such as the tale of how a desperate revival of two old

monster films at one Los Angeles theater lead to the second cycle of horror films in 1939.

Once in a while Soister throws his facts up in the air and lets them land in skewed fashion. In his chapter on *The Shadow*, he gets confused when trying to juggle the complex timeline of two magazines, novels, evolving radio shows and films. At one point Soister states, "When Orson Welles became involved, the popularity of *The Shadow* took off; author Maxwell Grant began a series of novels and short stories which endured for years." When does Soister think Orson Welles became involved? It was 1937, by which time Maxwell Grant had already written over 120 *Shadow* novels that ran in *The Shadow Magazine* beginning in April, 1931.

No matter. There's enough new material between these covers to make Soister's book a welcome addition to any film buff's library. McFarland has put a colorful, two-photo book cover on this one, which makes it more marketable to the average bookstore.

Reviewed by Michael Copner

September Song: An Intimate Biography of Walter Huston

(By John Weld, Scarecrow Press \$39.50, 283 pps., illustrated, index ISBN 0-8108-3408-1)

Walter Huston, one of the better actors in cinema, finally gets his moment in the biographical spotlight. Author John Weld, himself an actor, was a personal friend of the late actor, and he is able to present a well-balanced look at a very versatile performer.

In the introduction, Weld noted, "While [I was] living with the Hustons, Walter told me his story and I wrote it all down. This is it." And what a delight it is to read. Huston began his Broadway career, after a few years touring with stock companies, as a supernumerary in the opera *Le Cid*, starring the great Caruso. But fame would elude Huston for many years. He received some good notices, but was entrenched in the touring stock companies. On his thirty-first birthday he commented to his sister, "I've come a long way but haven't gone far...I have little to show for the years I've spent in show business...I wonder if my best years are behind me? My one consolation is that few men I've admired were under fifty...I'm a bohunk vaudevillian, a ten-dollar song-and-dance man, yet I keep seeing myself as the glamorous, scintillating Huston. It's only a matter of time, I keep telling myself, before I get the break that's coming to me. Just let me show my stuff to the right eyes and I'll be a cinch."

Huston, like many other stars, had his share of ups and downs in the theatre. He and his then-wife, Bayonne, made a deal with Loew's vaudeville theater circuit for \$1,200 a week. Shortly before signing with Loew's, the Shuberts offered them \$1,800 a week and (like many other performers) they quickly jumped ship and took the better offer. But the Shuberts were plagued by financial problems, and in 1923, the Hustons suddenly found themselves out of work. They also found themselves blackballed by both the Lowe's and Keith's theater circuits (as were other performers who signed with the Shuberts), leaving them with slim chances of employment. A year later, Walter made his appearance in *Mr. Pitt on Broadway* and became the toast of the town. His performance caught the attention of playwright Eugene O'Neill, who wanted him to appear in his production of *Desire Under the Elms*. Huston took a cut in pay (\$300 a week) to play the role of Eben Cabot, and when the curtain came down on opening night, Walter received a fifteen minute standing ovation.

Walter Huston's film debut was a bit more inconspicuous. He made his debut in a short subject, *The Carnival Man* (1928), at the Paramount Studios in Astoria, Long Island. His feature film debut came the following year in *Gentlemen of the Press*. But his lucky break came when he was cast as Trampas, playing opposite Gary Cooper in *The Virginian* (1929). Then came the lead in D.W. Griffith's *Abraham Lincoln*. While it fared poorly at the box-office, the film did

bolster Huston's standing as a film actor. Yet the really good roles were always eluding him.

Huston was signed by MGM, but they failed to really take advantage of his talent. He was played in programmer after programmer, giving Huston the financial stability which eluded him during his many years with touring companies. It wasn't until 1934 when he went back to Broadway to appear in the stage play *Dodsworth*, that Huston's career really took off. Teamed with his third and final wife, Nan Sunderland, Huston found himself in a huge hit. Huston and his wife toured with the play *Devil and Daniel Webster*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Duel in the Sun* was some of his best work and proved he could virtually play anything, even playing Shakespeare's *Othello* in 1934 on the stage. He even made a hit out of the song "September Song," which was written for Huston to sing in the play *Knickerbocker Holiday* (1938). Producer Hal Wallis used it in his film, *September Affair* (1951) and it became a big hit.

Weld includes many pictures of the actor, on and off camera. There is also a list of Huston's stage and film appearances. *September Song* is an enjoyable read and Weld is to be profusely thanked for getting it all down when Walter spoke the words. Film fans, scholars and aspiring actors are all better for having read this book. Huston's last line in his last film, *The Furies* (1950), sums it up perfectly: "There'll never be another like me." Amen, brother.

Reviewed by Michael F. Blake

Women in Horror Films, 1930s and 1940s,

Two volume set by Gregory William Mank from McFarland & Company.

Author Greg Mank has been working on this two volume set for several years and the final result was well worth waiting for. Mank profiles the lives and careers of 42 actresses who did some of their best work in horror films. The first volume covers 21 actresses working in the 1930s including, Fay Wray, Helen Chandler, Zita Johann, Frances Drake and Elsa Lanchester. Volume 2 concentrates on the 1940s actresses such as Evelyn Ankers, Anne Gwynne and Louise Currie.

Mank, who is a particularly sensitive writer, does an excellent job working with the stories of these largely unsung heroines of the horror films. Fortunately he was able to interview many of the subjects of this two volume set and the intimate tone adds immeasurably to the enjoyment of this book. Many of the women in this book led tragic lives. Actresses like Helen Chandler, Jean Brooks and Anne Nagel and their sad stories are well profiled by Mank.

Fortunately most had happy lives and Mank relates these stories as well. It was a joy to read about people like Elena Verdugo, Anne Gwynne, Louise Currie and Gloria Stuart (especially her triumphant return in *Titanic*). It is about time that these talented and beautiful women were given their due in print and Greg Mank has done an admirable job.

Reviewed by Buddy Barnett

Suspense, Twenty Years of Thrills and Chills

By Martin Grams, Jr. \$29.95 +\$3 shipping softbound from Suspense Book, PO Box 189, Delta PA 17314.

Suspense, one of the most famous and popular radio shows, ran for 20 years on CBS radio. Martin Grams, Jr. has written an informative and interesting history of this radio classic. The interesting thing about *Suspense* was the fact that many popular movie stars clamored to be on this show. Throughout its run *Suspense* featured stars like Humphrey Bogart, Orson Welles, Lucille Ball, Cary Grant, James Cagney, Bob Hope, Ginger Rogers, Joan Crawford, Myrna Loy and many, many others. Some of the greatest horror movie stars like Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, George Zucco,

Peter Lorre and Vincent Price appeared on *Suspense*.

The book has an interesting production history with interviews of many of the people who worked on the show. A complete list of the more than 900 shows is included with credits and a brief synopsis. Grams also covers the now forgotten television version from the late 1940s and early 1950s (both Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi appeared on the TV series as well as the radio show.) *Suspense, Twenty Years of Thrills and Chills* is an essential reference tool for fans of old radio shows.

Reviewed by Buddy Barnett

Sliders The Classic Episodes

By Brad Linaweaver. \$14.95 softbound from TV Books.

The science fiction show *Sliders*, which originally ran on the Fox television network and was later transferred to the Sci-Fi Channel, has a very definite cult following. Its cult following may not be to the levels of *Dr. Who*, *Star Trek*, or *The X-Files* but it has a sizable cult following nevertheless.

Sliders is a science fiction series (later becoming more and more fantasy oriented) about a group of scientists who find a way to 'slide' into parallel universes where they have a number of adventures in alternate realities. This gives the producers ample opportunities to explore 'what-if' scenarios such as a Soviet occupied America or a world where Oliver North is president and we are still at war with Japan!

Cult Movies' frequent contributing writer Brad Linaweaver is the author of this episode guide for the 'classic' batch of *Sliders'* shows for the first three seasons on the Fox network before it was transferred to the Sci-Fi Channel and promptly screwed up by the people in charge over there. Brad's guide is written in a breezy, informative, and chatty style. Brad includes production credits, synopses and his personal critiques for most of the episodes. He also includes interviews with the stars, Sabrina Lloyd, Jerry O'Connell, John Rhys-Davies and Cleavant Derricks as well as the producers and creators Tracy Torme and Robert K. Weiss.

Sliders The Classic Episodes is a must for the rabid *Sliders* fan and also serves as a good introduction to the series for the novice viewer.

Reviewed by Buddy Barnett

Screams of Reason, Mad Science and Modern Culture

By David J. Skal \$29.95 hardbound from W. W. Norton.

David J. Skal, renowned author of *Hollywood Gothic* and *The Monster Show*, has come up with another winner with *Screams of Reason*. Skal is a very gifted writer and he has real talent for making some of the strangest subjects extremely interesting. In *Screams of Reason* he tackles Mad Scientists and technology and popular culture's obsessions with the subject going as far back as Mary Shelley's novel of *Frankenstein* in 1818. As a matter of fact, Skal's book places a very heavy emphasis on *Frankenstein* movies and he comes up with some very surprising and novel observations.

Screams of Reason is a very entertaining work of art as Skal takes us on a wildly interesting journey through a myriad of topics including the *Frankenstein* movies, world domination, the Invisible Man, H.G. Wells, Nazis, Aids, HMOs, Atomic bombs, UFOs, space aliens with big heads, Art Bell, the Heaven's Gate suicide, Bela Lugosi and gorillas, Boris Karloff's forehead scar in *Bride of Frankenstein*, Ed Wood's *Bride of the Monster*, Roswell, the Tin Man from *The Wizard of Oz* and an assortment of brains and disembodied heads.

At the end of the book Skal includes an appendix featuring his favorite mad scientists and a list of their mad ambitions. You won't be able to put this book down once you've started reading.

Reviewed by Buddy Barnett

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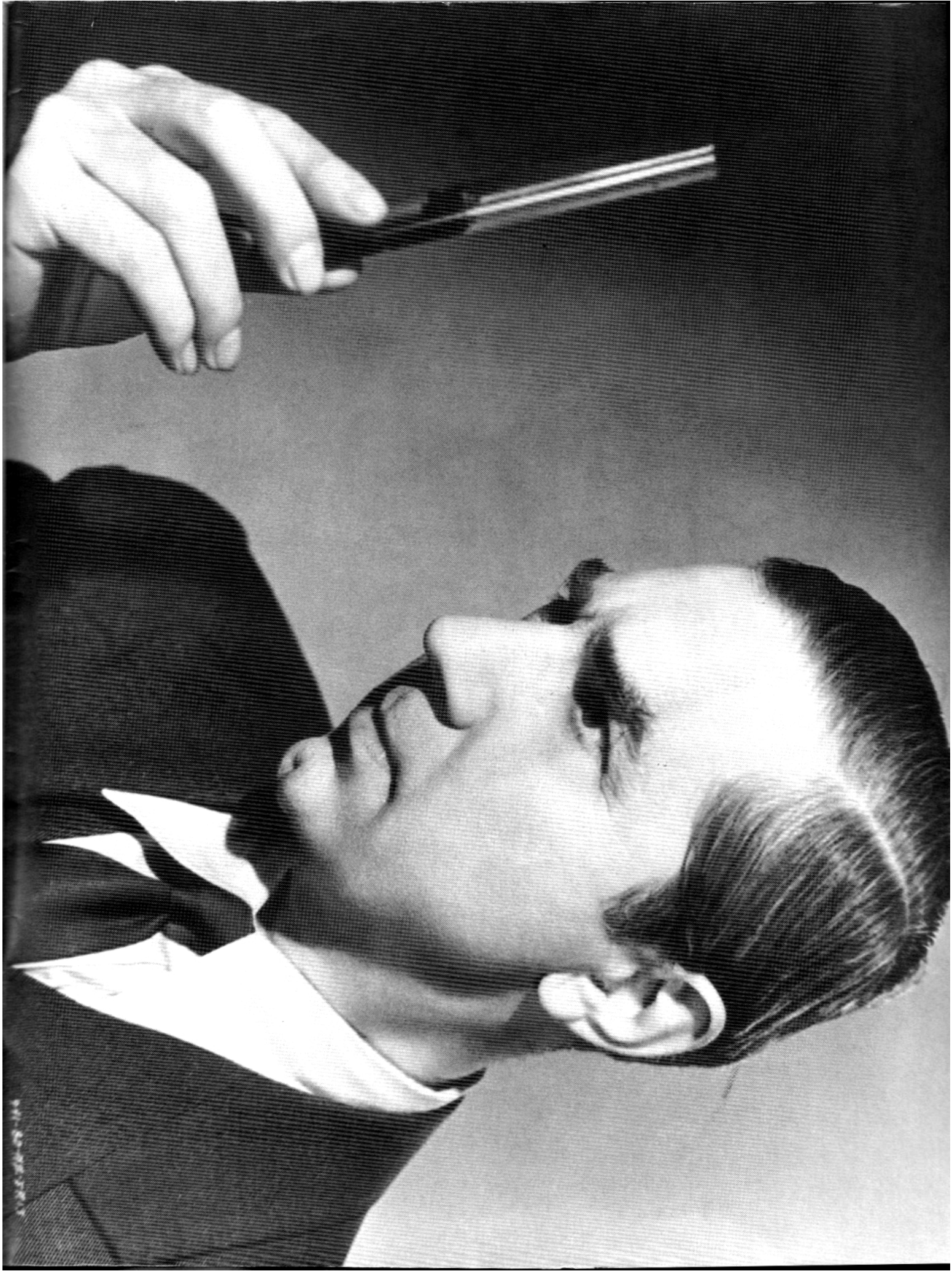
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